"OF MIZUKI'S WAR STORIES, I HAVE ALWAYS believed that this 1973 *gekiga*, *Sôin Gyokusai Seyo!* [Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths] is one of his best. It is Mizuki's own telling, in dramatic manga style, of the fate of the aforementioned doomed unit in New Guinea. In the story's gruesome detail, in the contrast between realistic and 'cartoony' art, and in Mizuki's obvious anger over the way arrogant officers squandered the lives of their men, I think it is one of the most powerful anti-war comics ever created.

"And I am overjoyed that Drawn & Quarterly has decided to publish it."—Frederik L. Schodt, from his introduction to *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths*

ONWARD TOWARDS OUR NOBLE DEATHS

SHIGERU MIZUKI

ONWARD TOWARDS OUR NOBLE DEATHS SHIGERU MIZUKI

FROM THE PREEMINENT AND MOST FAMOUS LIVING JAPANESE CARTOONIST

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY FREDERIK L. SCHODT

ONWARD TOWARDS OUR NOBLE DEATHS IS A FICTIONALIZED MEMOIR OF Shigeru Mizuki's time served in the Imperial Army in World War II. Set against the tropical island backdrop of the South Pacific, the story explores the camaraderie of the troops dealing not only with the nightmarish realities of war like hunger, disease and death, but also the devastating consequences of the *gyokusai* dictate of the Imperial Army—that one must die for their country at all costs, if not in battle then by suicide. Balancing humor and horror, realism and cartooning, Mizuki deftly addresses and critiques the moral depravity of war. First published in 1973, this groundbreaking graphic novel was one of the first fully formed accounts of war told in the comics format, and remains equally compelling almost forty years later. Mizuki has been published around the world and is one of the best known and lauded artists in Japan; there is even a popular daily television show about him and his wife. This is his first book to be translated into English.

ONWARD TOWARDS OUR NOBLE DEATHS

SHIGERU MIZUKI

TRANSLATION BY
JOCELYNE ALLEN

DRAWN & QUARTERLY
MONTRÉAL

INTRODUCTION

FREDERIK L. SCHODT

When I heard that one of Shigeru Mizuki's stories was about to be published in English, my first thought was: Finally! There has been an explosion in the number of translated manga titles in the last twenty years—so much so that some fans can be forgiven for thinking they now have access to most everything ever published in Japan. But there are still many famous works with a universal quality, done by extraordinarily talented artists which, for various and mysterious reasons, remain unknown in North America. Foremost among them until recently, to my way of thinking, has been the work of Shigeru Mizuki.

As I write this, Shigeru Mizuki is nearly ninety years old, living on the outskirts of Tokyo. Unlike most artists, whose auras start to fade with the passing years, he has only grown brighter, as new generations discover his work, and older generations discover new aspects of the man they thought they knew so well. Among the pantheon of legendary manga artists in Japan, Mizuki stands out not only for his longevity, but also for his originality. When discussing him, critics rarely talk about how he resembles other artists because it is difficult to compare him to anyone else. He started drawing manga before most artists alive today were born, and he has already outlived many pioneering (and younger) luminaries of manga's golden age, such as Osamu Tezuka, Fujiko F. Fujio, and Shôtarô Ishinomori.

Mizuki was born Shigeru Mura in 1922, and raised on the isolated western seaboard of Japan. He exhibited a precocious drawing ability as a child. Much later, after the war, he briefly attended the prestigious Musashino Art University in Tokyo, but he fortunately did not become mired in artistic orthodoxy. Today one of the hallmarks of many of his manga stories is his use of highly realistic, detailed backgrounds, while rendering human characters in quirky, "cartoony" shapes.

From an early age, Mizuki had a voracious curiosity about the world and about life, and an independent streak. As a child, a local woman he called *non-non bâ*, or "Auntie Non-non," often took care of him, and helped him develop a passionate interest in the spirit world, especially in local tales of *yôkai*. Sometimes translated as goblins and ghosts in the animistic world view of Japanese people, *yôkai* often resemble the trolls of northern Europe, for they are closely linked with local natural phenomena and objects. Mizuki would eventually make *yôkai* his trademark manga subjects, and become Japan's foremost *yôkai* popularizer. As a self-declared *yôkai* researcher, he would also look beyond Japan, and travel to exotic locales around the world to learn about the supernatural beliefs of other cultures.

In the early postwar period, before entering the manga mainstream, Mizuki worked for a time drawing for the *kamishibai* or "paper-play" market—an inexpensive form of street entertainment in the days before television wherein raconteurs embroidered tales with a sequence of illustrated panels. *Kamishibai* have largely vanished from modern Japan, but there is currently a renewed interest in their connection to modern manga. Not coincidentally, Mizuki and some of his *kamishibai* work was recently introduced in the United States in 2010, in Eric P. Nash's lavishly illustrated book, *Manga Kamishibai*. But Mizuki also drew stories for the manga pay-library market—a series of for-profit libraries that lent manga (and books) for a small fee to entertainment-starved readers. His debut work, published in paperback form in 1957 when he was already thirty-three years old, was titled *Rocketman*.

Mizuki's first real commercial success came around 1965, when he drew a story for boys called *Terebi-kun* [TV kid], about a young boy who discovers how to enter his TV set, steal the products displayed on commercials and give them to his poorer, real-world friends. And thereafter, Mizuki began to win the hearts of Japan, especially with his *yôkai* stories. He drew heavily on Japanese spirit traditions, but the paranormal world he depicted was completely his own, and the *yôkai* that populated it were, rather than scary, remarkably bizarre and endearing. Kitarô, his most famous creation, in the series *Ge ge ge no Kitarô* [Kitarô the Spooky], was born of a family of ghost-goblins, the last of their kind on earth, who live among ordinary humans. His parents "die," but the father's eyeball survives (with little arms and legs) and becomes Kitarô's guardian. Kitarô has only one eye, so the father's eye sometimes hides in Kitarô's eye socket. Children absolutely loved this weirdness, and as a result *Ge ge ge no Kitarô* was animated for television in 1968. Today, it is probably safe to say, that in the minds of most young Japanese, Mizuki's *yôkai* characters and stories have supplanted the original folk-tales and legends that inspired them. It would be hard to exaggerate their popularity.

In 2009, I finally visited Sakaiminato, the little town on the Japan Sea coast where Mizuki grew up. Here, he has been nearly deified, for the train line that runs between the Yonago city and Sakaiminato is now named after his *yôkai* characters and decorated with their images. And in the town of Sakaiminato there is a section called "Mizuki Road," where the street is lined with over a hundred bronze statues of his *yôkai* characters, a museum dedicated to him, and stores selling Mizuki and *yôkai*-themed trinkets. There is even a bronze statue of Mizuki himself, with one of his more famous and typically idiosyncratic recommendations to the world: "Be lazy."

Fascination with Mizuki and his characters has been propelled in recent years by two television series broadcast on the public channel, NHK. The first was an award-winning series in 1991 and 1992, based on one of his stories about "Auntie Non-non," who taught him about the spirit world. The second aired in 2010 and was also hugely popular. Titled *Ge ge ge no nyôbô* [Ge ge ge's wife], it was based on a book by his wife, about her life with her unusual husband.

Yet no matter how popular and commercialized Mizuki and his *yôkai* world becomes, he always stands apart from other successful manga artists. In large part, this is because of his life experience. Mizuki was an active combatant in World War II, and this fact is always driven home upon meeting him because his left arm is missing.

Mizuki was drafted into the Imperial Army in 1943 and sent to Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, in what is now part of Papua New Guinea. It was one of the worst places to be sent in the war, and quickly became a showcase for some of the worst aspects of the Imperial Army. As one of the lower-ranking, late arrivals in a hierarchical and feudalistic command structure, Mizuki was constantly beaten by his superiors. While on sentry duty in the field one day, his detachment was completely wiped out in an attack by Australians and native forces. Mizuki made a harrowing escape alone back to Japanese lines, only to be reprimanded by his superiors for losing his rifle, and (in Imperial Army style) for surviving. He later lost his arm during a raid by Allied airplanes, when he was badly wounded. After lingering on the verge of death, and battling malaria, he was eventually nursed back to health.

During this time Mizuki developed a deep affection for the natives of New Guinea, and he claims to have realized that a spirit force was guiding his life. Had he not been out of commission, he probably would not have survived the war. In a fairly famous incident, a unit to which he would have been attached was sent out on a *banzai* [suicide] charge, but miraculously survived. Since the men's "glorious death" had already been reported to headquarters, it was sent back to the front with orders not to return alive.

These personal experiences provide the real punch for Mizuki's war stories, which are far less well known in Japan than his *yôkai* work. Many have an anti-war theme, commiserate with the plight of the average soldier, and may be a way for him to exorcize his own personal demons. The same burning spirit also pervades a remarkable 2000-page manga documentary work that he created in 1994 about Japan's turbulent and controversial history during the reign of Emperor Hirohito from 1925–1989.

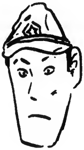
Of Mizuki's war stories, I have always believed that this 1973 *gekiga*, *Sôin Gyokusai Seyo!* [Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths] is one of his best. It is Mizuki's own telling, in dramatic manga style, of the fate of the aforementioned doomed unit in New Guinea. In the story's gruesome detail, in the contrast between realistic and "cartoony" art, and in Mizuki's obvious anger over the way arrogant officers squandered the lives of their men, I think it is one of the most powerful anti-war comics ever created.

And I am overjoyed that Drawn & Quarterly has decided to publish it.

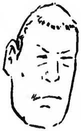
Frederik L. Schodt
February 2011
San Francisco, California

Frederik L. Schodt has written extensively on the subject of Japanese cartooning. His books include *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, *Dreamland Japan*, and *The Astro Boy Essays*. As a translator, he has worked on English-language editions of titles such as *Barefoot Gen*, *Astro Boy*, *Phoenix*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and *The Four Immigrants Manga*. In 2009, he was awarded the Japanese Government's Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Manga Award for helping to promote Japanese popular culture overseas.

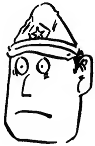
CHARACTERS



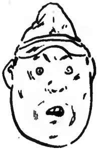
PLATOON LEADER MIZUMOTO
SECOND LIEUTENANT



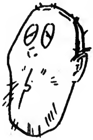
COMPANY COMMANDER
CAPTAIN



BATTALION COMMANDER TADOKORO
MAJOR



HONDA, LEADER OF SQUAD NO. 3
SERGEANT



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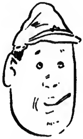
CORPORAL



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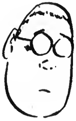
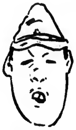
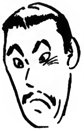
CORPORAL



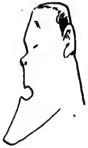
MARUYAMA
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



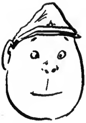
NOGAMI
ACTING CORPORAL



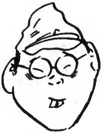
OKUYAMA, LEADER OF SQUAD NO. 4
LANCE-CORPORAL



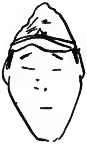
MIURA
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



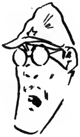
KAGEYAMA
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



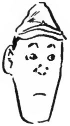
YOKOI
CORPORAL



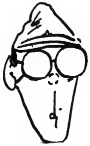
OGAWA
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS



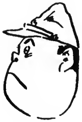
CORPSMAN KAMIYA
ACTING CORPORAL



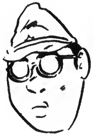
KAYAMA
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



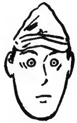
KOBAYASHI
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



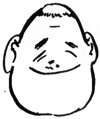
NAKAMOTO
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



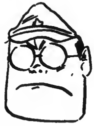
SAKAIDA
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



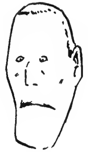
AKASAKI
PRIVATE SECOND CLASS



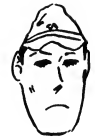
KOJIMA
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS



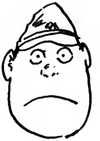
KANEDA
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS



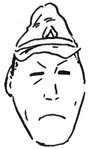
HOMU
MILITARY POLICE LIEUTENANT



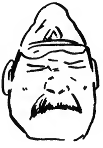
KITAZAKI, LEADER OF PLATOON NO. 3 SECOND LIEUTENANT



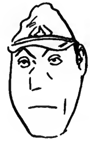
YAMAGISHI, LEADER OF PLATOON NO. 1 SECOND LIEUTENANT



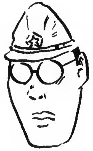
DIVISION COMMANDER
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL



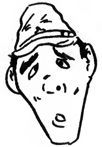
CHIEF OF STAFF
COLONEL



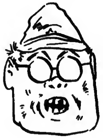
KIDO, STAFF
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL



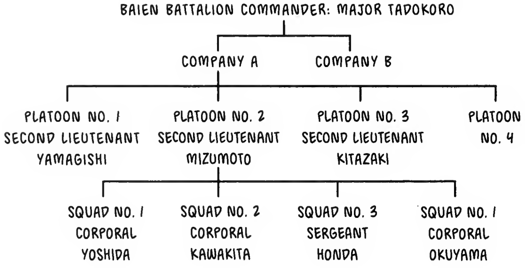
DR. ISHIYAMA
MEDICAL LIEUTENANT



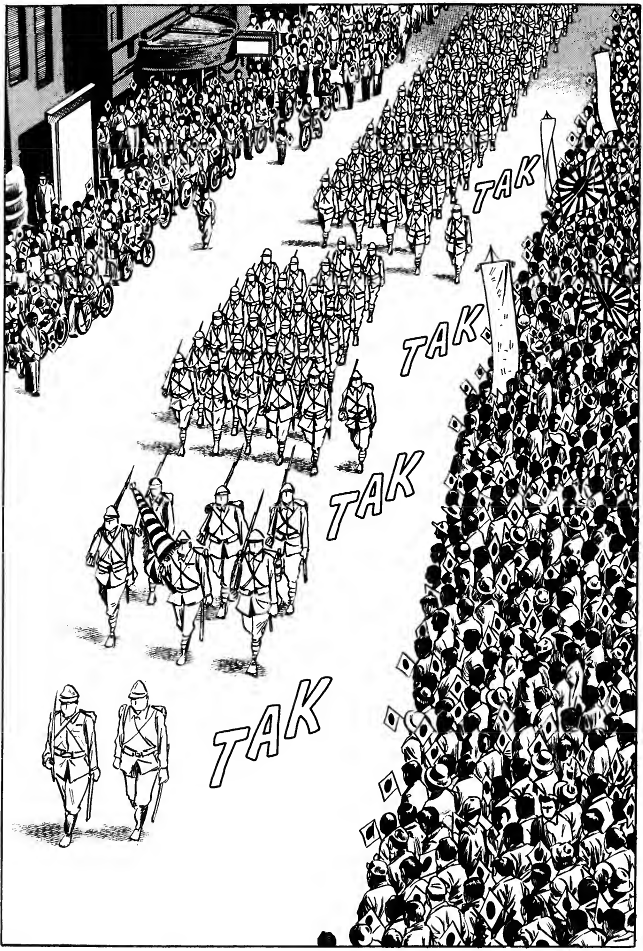
KIRIMOTO
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS



MORITA
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

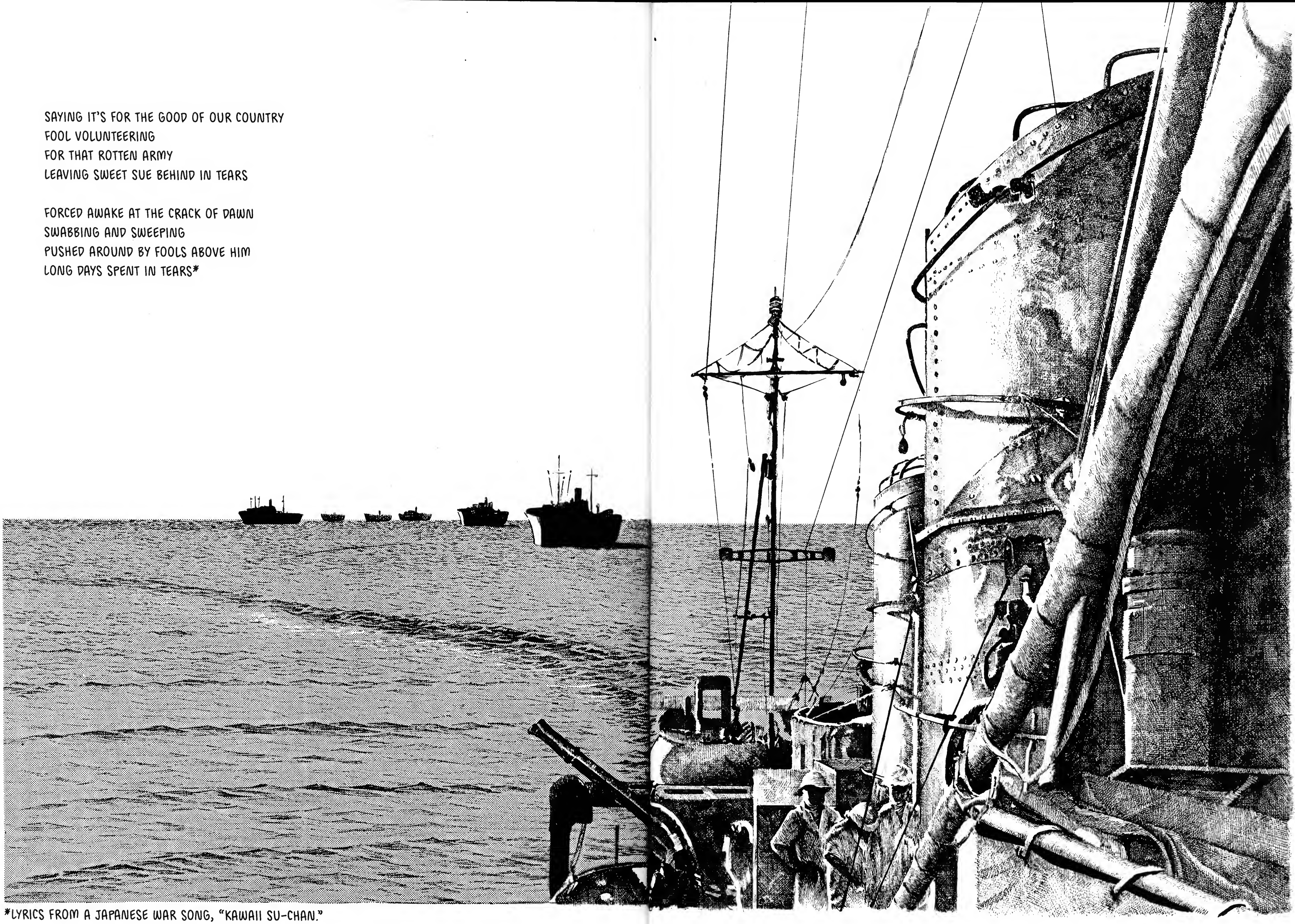


- BAIEN BATTALION COMMANDER: MAJOR TADOKORO
  - COMPANY A
    - PLATOON NO. 1 SECOND LIEUTENANT YAMAGISHI
    - PLATOON NO. 2 SECOND LIEUTENANT MIZUMOTO
      - SQUAD NO. 1 CORPORAL YOSHIDA
      - SQUAD NO. 2 CORPORAL KAWAKITA
      - SQUAD NO. 3 SERGEANT HONDA
      - SQUAD NO. 1 CORPORAL OKUYAMA
    - PLATOON NO. 3 SECOND LIEUTENANT KITAZAKI
    - PLATOON NO. 4
  - COMPANY B

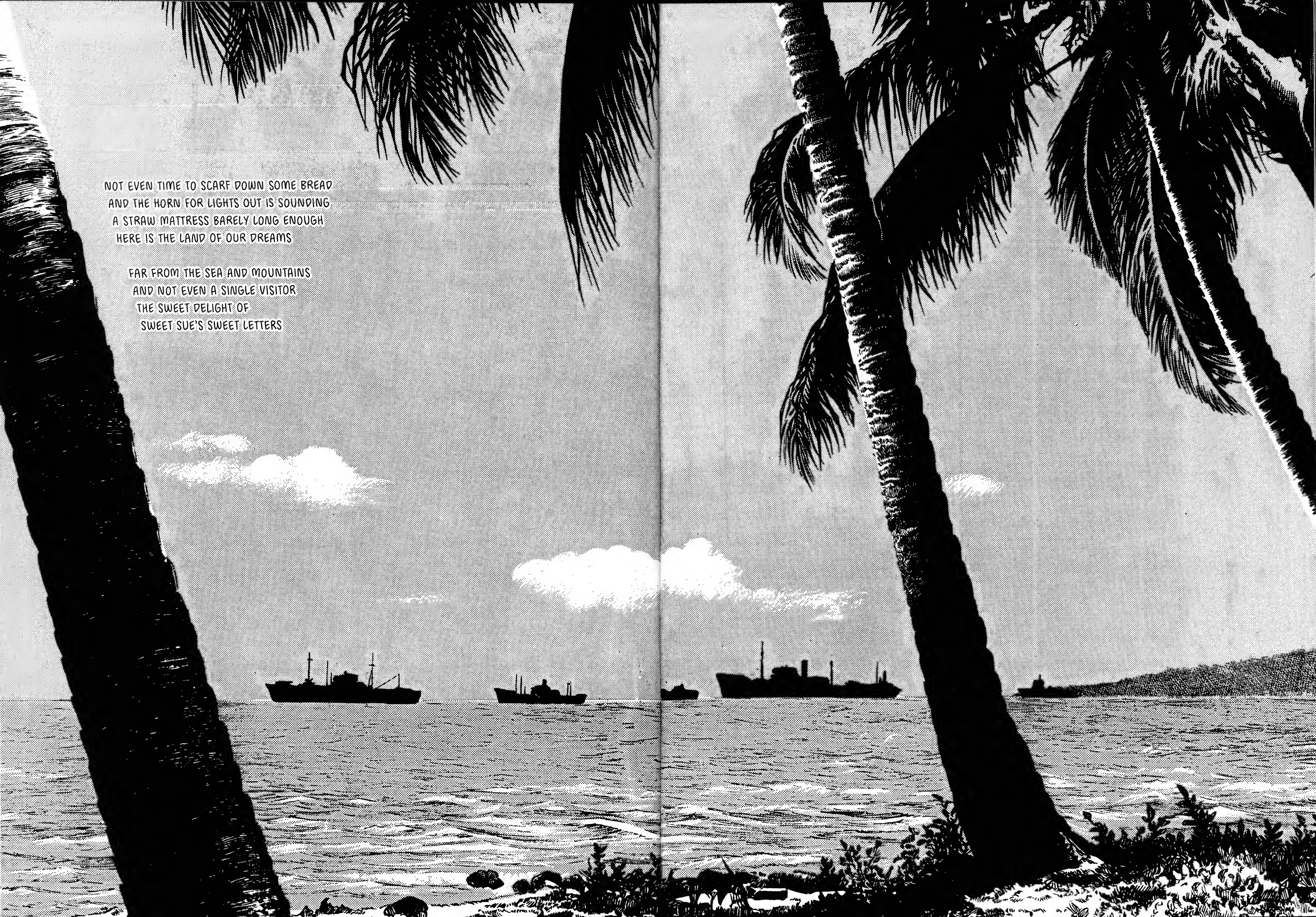

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

SAYING IT'S FOR THE GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY
FOOL VOLUNTEERING
FOR THAT ROTTEN ARMY
LEAVING SWEET SUE BEHIND IN TEARS

FORCED AWAKE AT THE CRACK OF DAWN
SWABBING AND SWEEPING
PUSHED AROUND BY FOOLS ABOVE HIM
LONG DAYS SPENT IN TEARS*

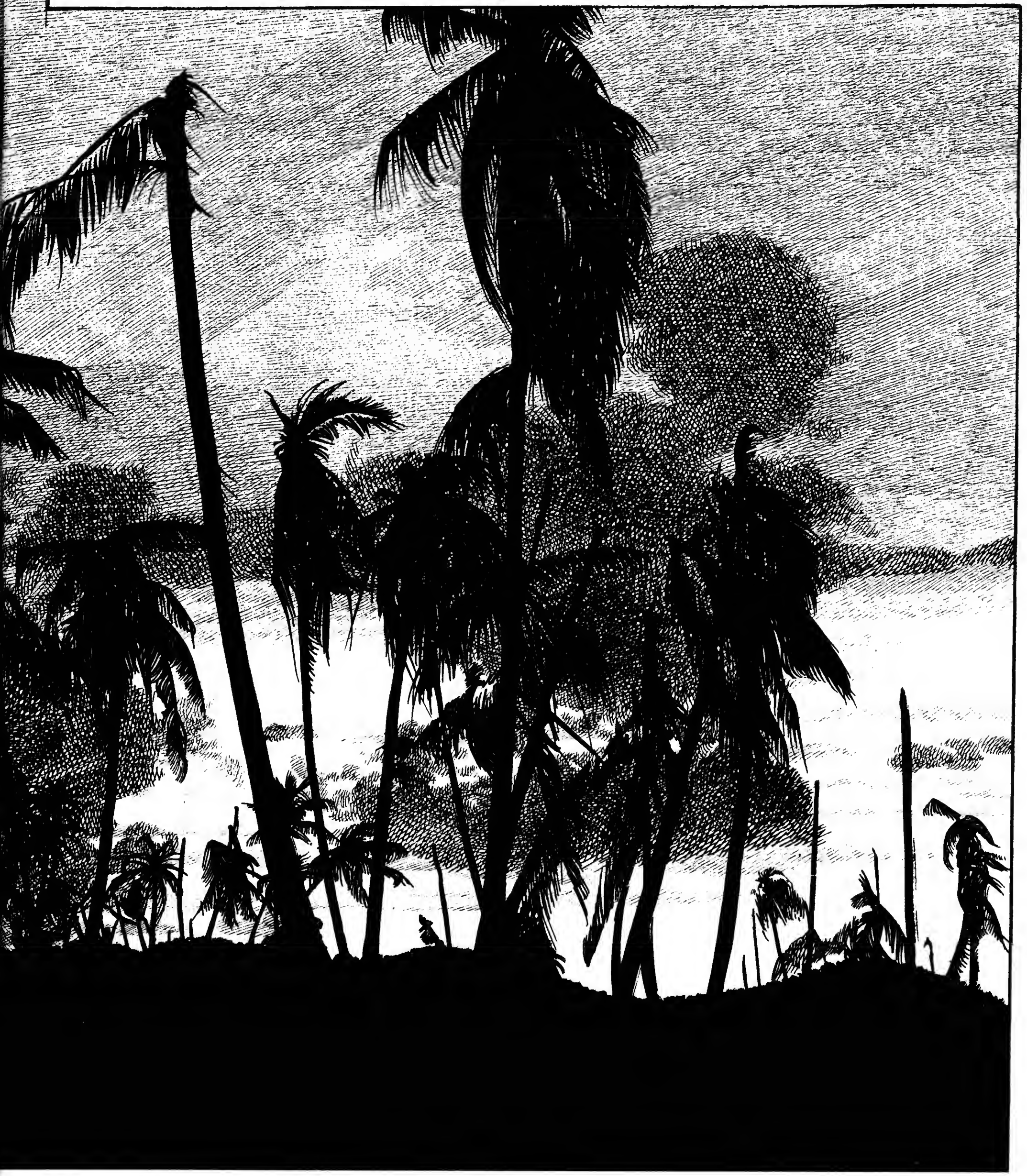


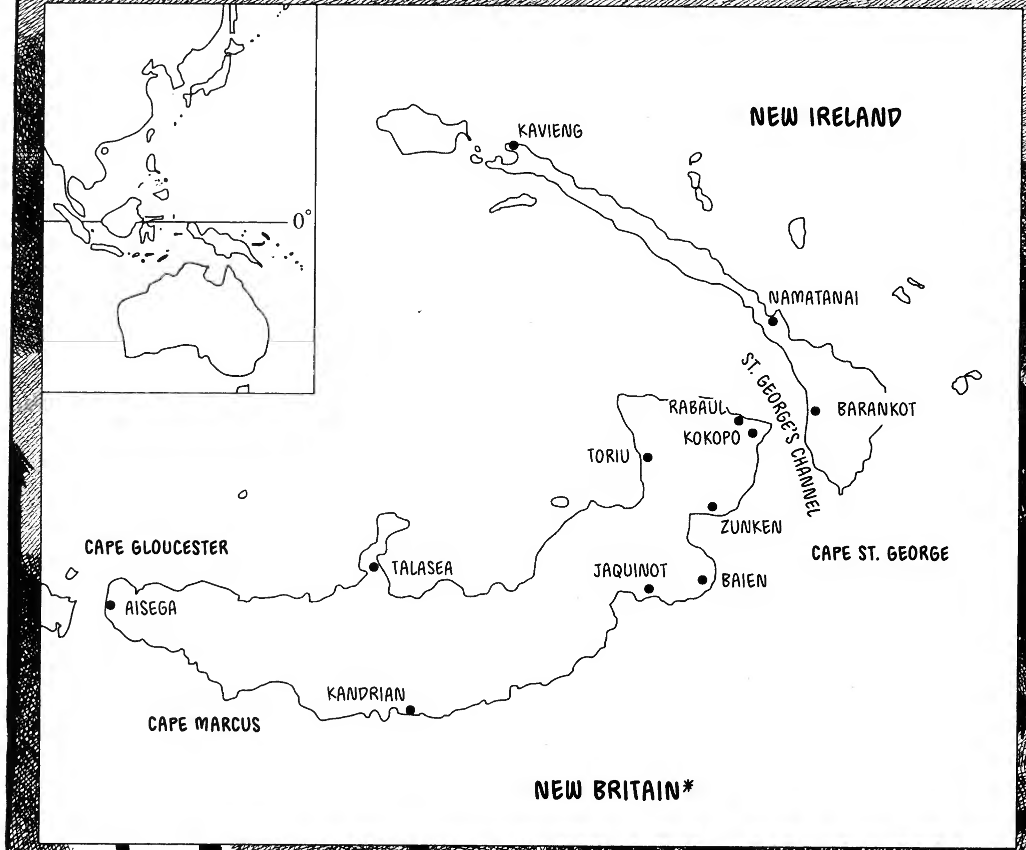
*LYRICS FROM A JAPANESE WAR SONG, "KAWAII SU-CHAN."


NOT EVEN TIME TO SCARF DOWN SOME BREAD
AND THE HORN FOR LIGHTS OUT IS SOUNDING
A STRAW MATTRESS BARELY LONG ENOUGH
HERE IS THE LAND OF OUR DREAMS
FAR FROM THE SEA AND MOUNTAINS
AND NOT EVEN A SINGLE VISITOR
THE SWEET DELIGHT OF
SWEET SUE'S SWEET LETTERS

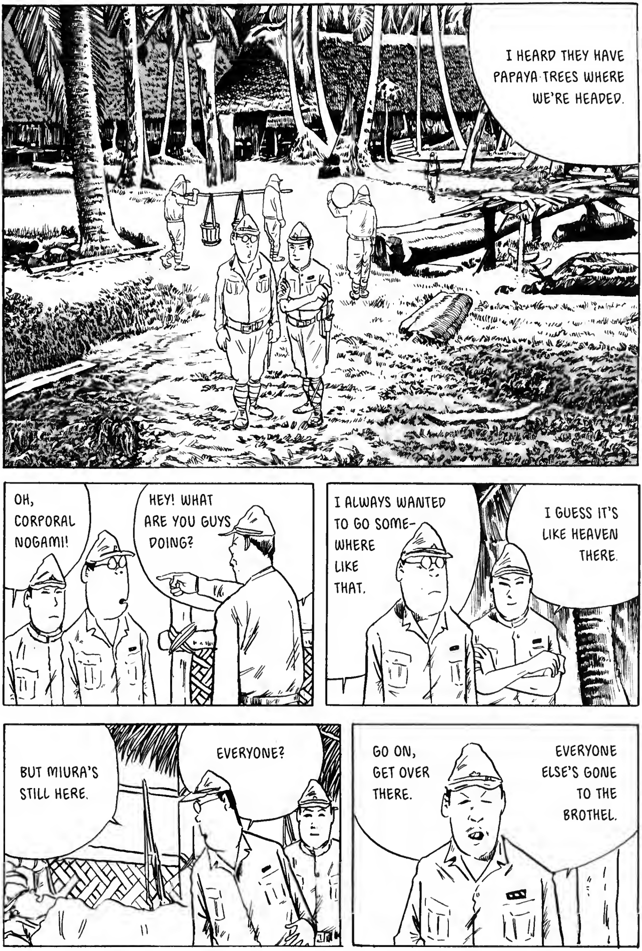
KOKOPO, NEW BRITAIN

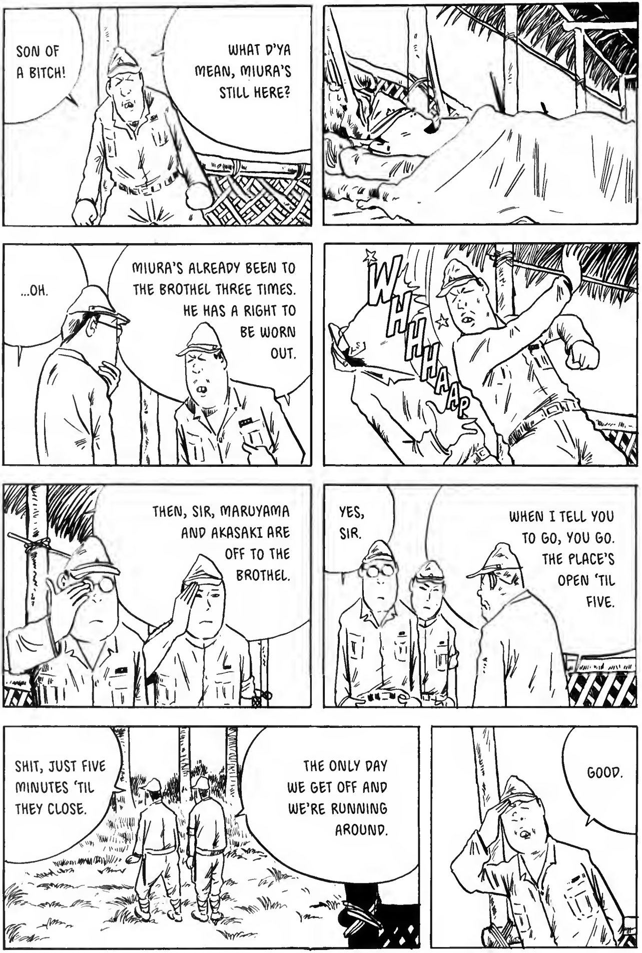
END OF 1943

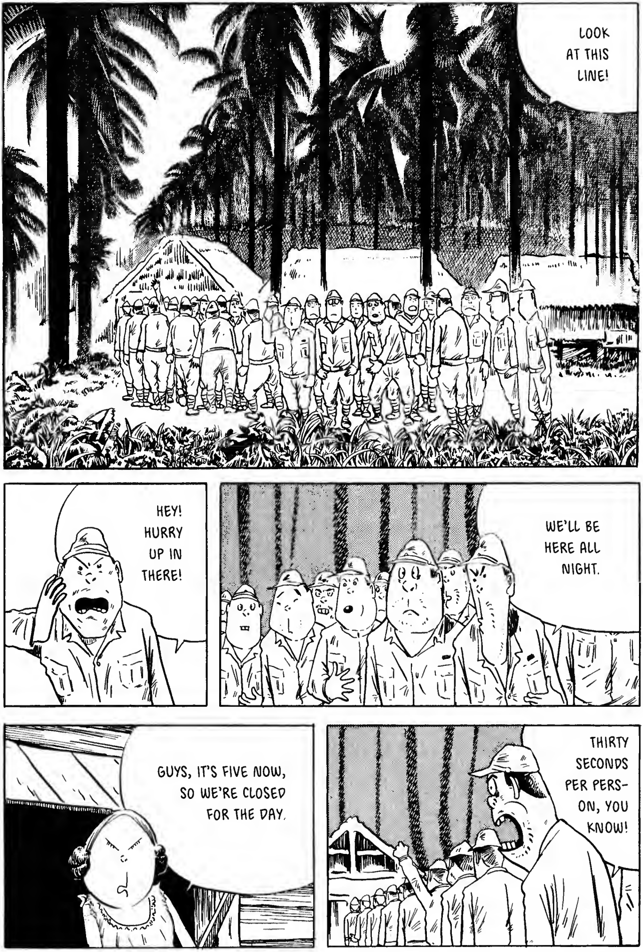


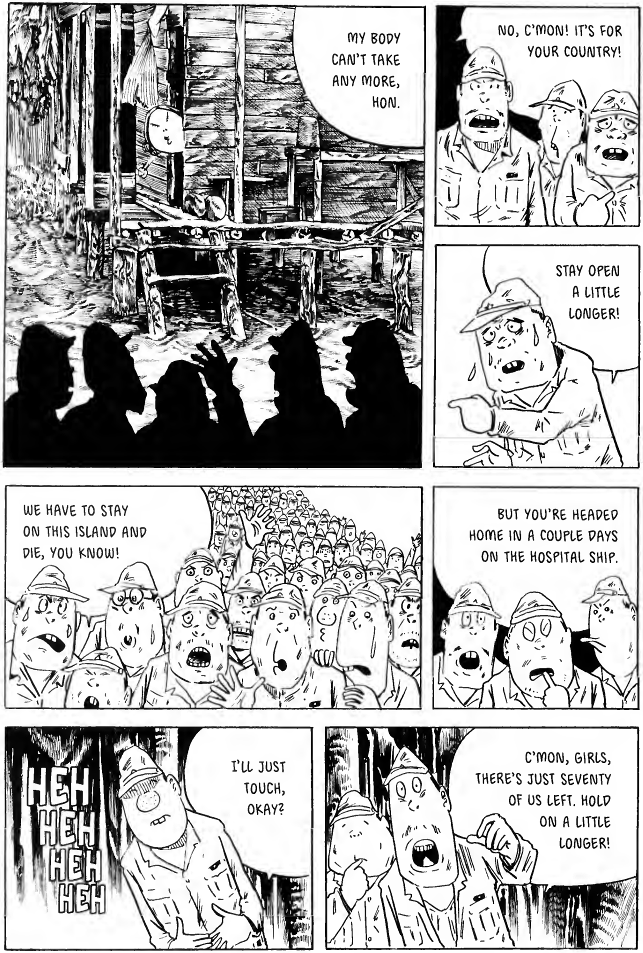

NEW IRELAND
KAVIENG
NAMATANAI
BARANKOT
ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL
RABAUL
KOKOPO
TORIU
ZUNKEN
CAPE ST. GEORGE
CAPE GLOUCESTER
TALASEA
JAQUINOT
BAIEN
AISEGA
KANDRIAN
CAPE MARCUS
NEW BRITAIN*
0°

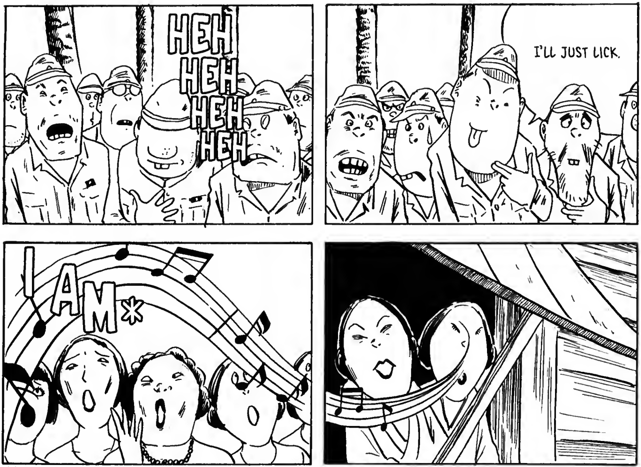
*NEW BRITAIN IS AN ISLAND IN THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN ARCHIPELAGO.


I HEARD THEY HAVE PAPAYA TREES WHERE WE'RE HEADED.
OH, CORPORAL NOGAMI!
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?
I ALWAYS WANTED TO GO SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT.
I GUESS IT'S LIKE HEAVEN THERE.
BUT MIURA'S STILL HERE.
EVERYONE?
GO ON, GET OVER THERE.
EVERYONE ELSE'S GONE TO THE BROTHEL.

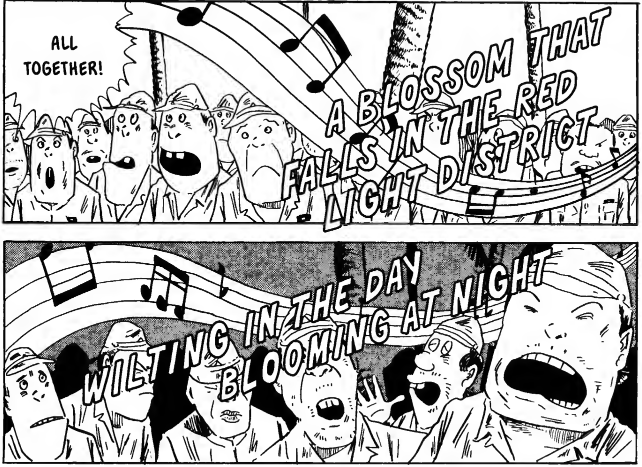

SON OF A BITCH!
WHAT D'YA MEAN, MIURA'S STILL HERE?
...OH.
MIURA'S ALREADY BEEN TO THE BROTHEL THREE TIMES. HE HAS A RIGHT TO BE WORN OUT.
WHHHHAAP
THEN, SIR, MARUYAMA AND AKASAKI ARE OFF TO THE BROTHEL.
YES, SIR.
WHEN I TELL YOU TO GO, YOU GO. THE PLACE'S OPEN 'TIL FIVE.
SHIT, JUST FIVE MINUTES 'TIL THEY CLOSE.
THE ONLY DAY WE GET OFF AND WE'RE RUNNING AROUND.
GOOD.

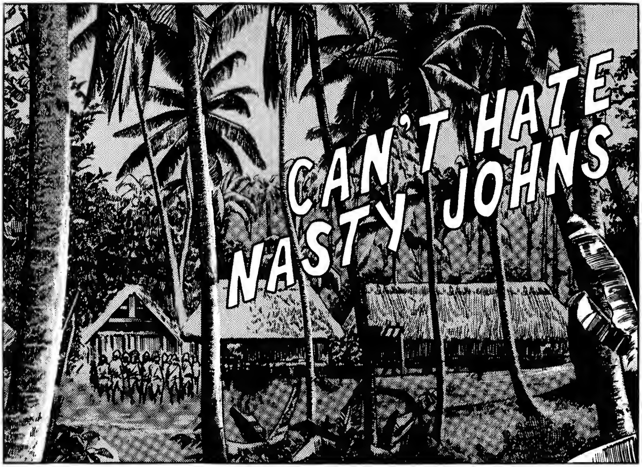

LOOK AT THIS LINE!
HEY! HURRY UP IN THERE!
WE'LL BE HERE ALL NIGHT.
GUYS, IT'S FIVE NOW, SO WE'RE CLOSED FOR THE DAY.
THIRTY SECONDS PER PERSON, YOU KNOW!

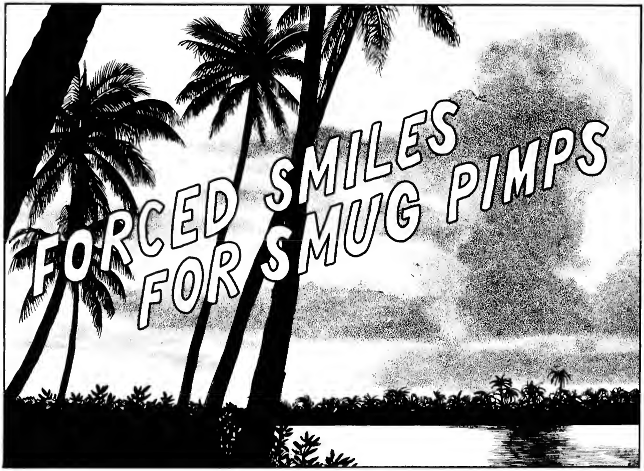

MY BODY CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE, HON.
NO, C'MON! IT'S FOR YOUR COUNTRY!
STAY OPEN A LITTLE LONGER!
WE HAVE TO STAY ON THIS ISLAND AND DIE, YOU KNOW!
BUT YOU'RE HEADED HOME IN A COUPLE DAYS ON THE HOSPITAL SHIP.
HEH HEH HEH HEH
I'LL JUST TOUCH, OKAY?
C'MON, GIRLS, THERE'S JUST SEVENTY OF US LEFT. HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER!

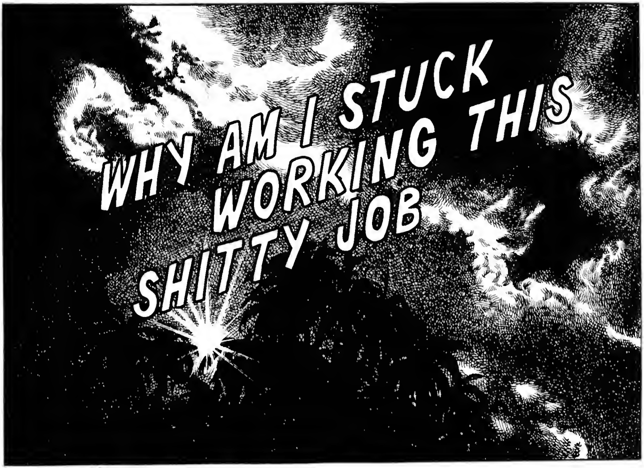

HEH HEH HEH HEH
I'LL JUST LICK.
I AM*

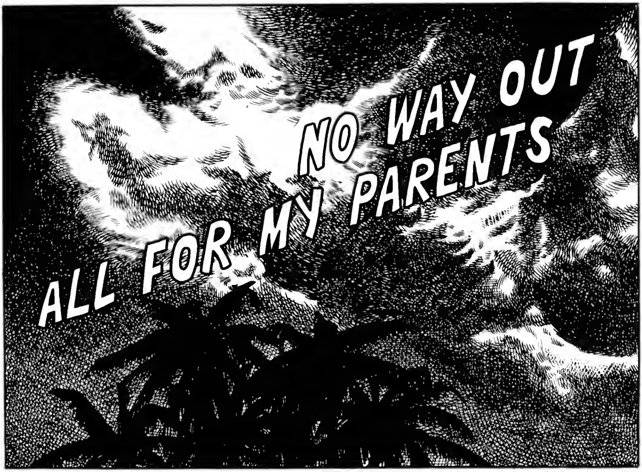
*"PROSTITUTE'S LAMENT" WAS SUNG BY SOLDIERS DURING THE WAR; NO RECORDINGS OF IT REMAIN.

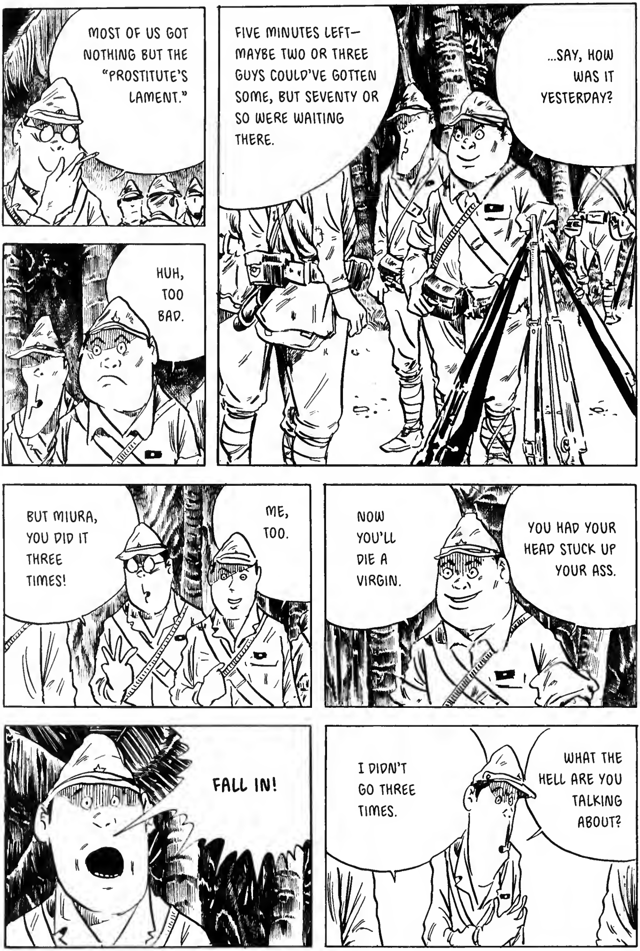

ALL TOGETHER!
A BLOSSOM THAT FALLS IN THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT
WILTING IN THE DAY BLOOMING AT NIGHT

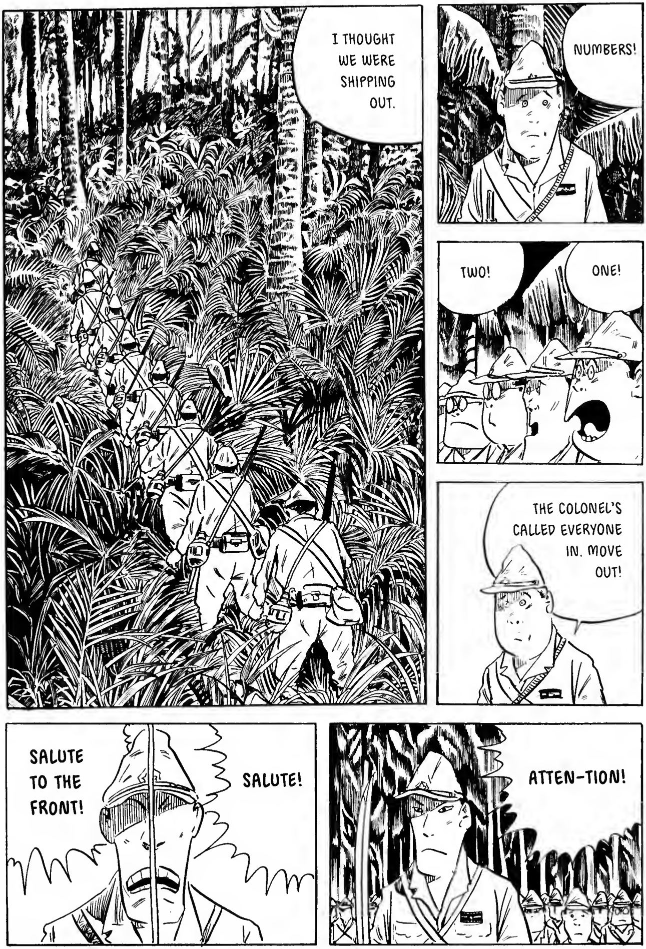

CAN'T HATE
NASTY JOHNS

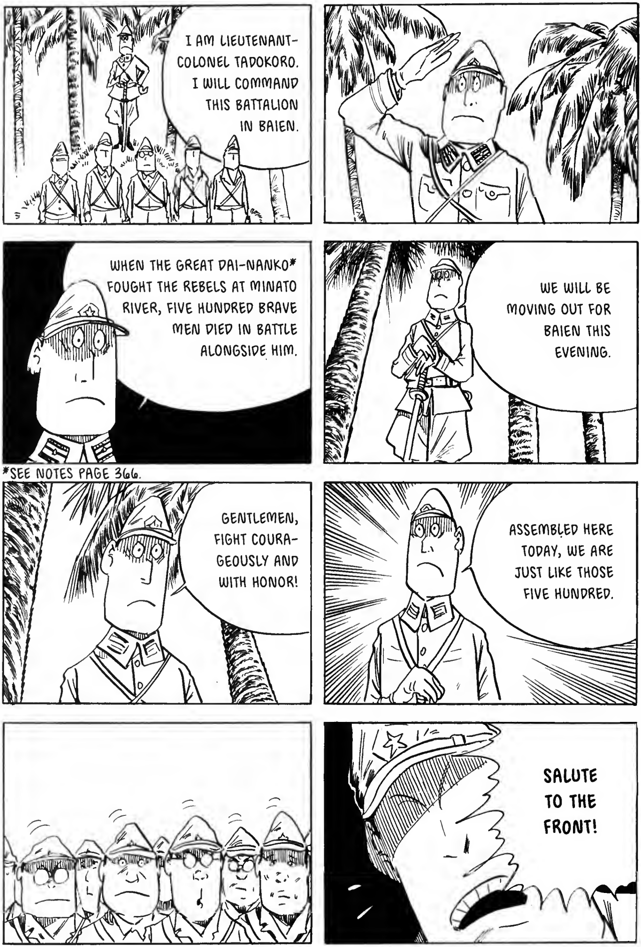

FORCED SMILES
FOR SMUG PIMPS


WHY AM I STUCK
WORKING THIS
SHITTY JOB

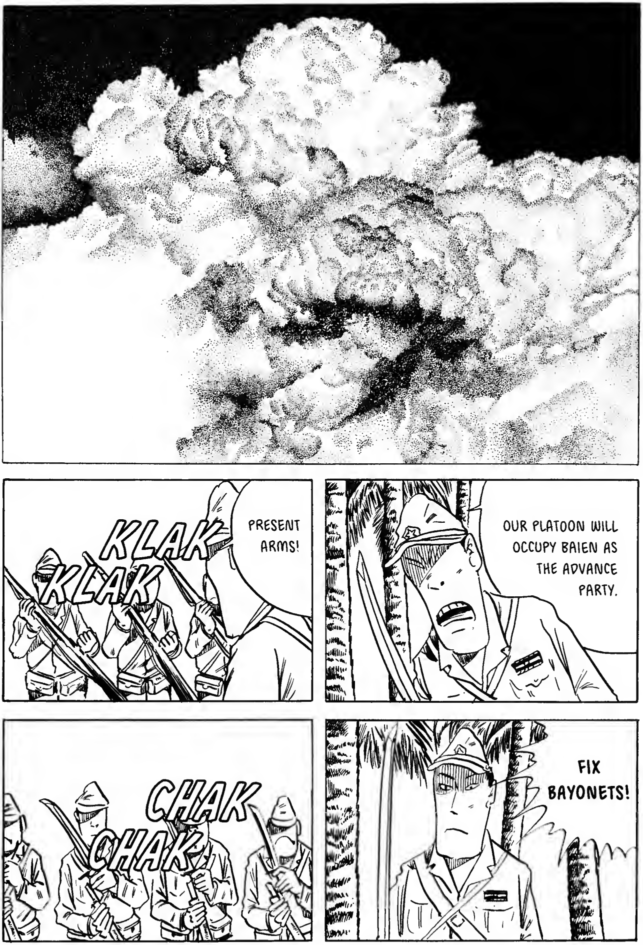

NO WAY OUT
ALL FOR MY PARENTS

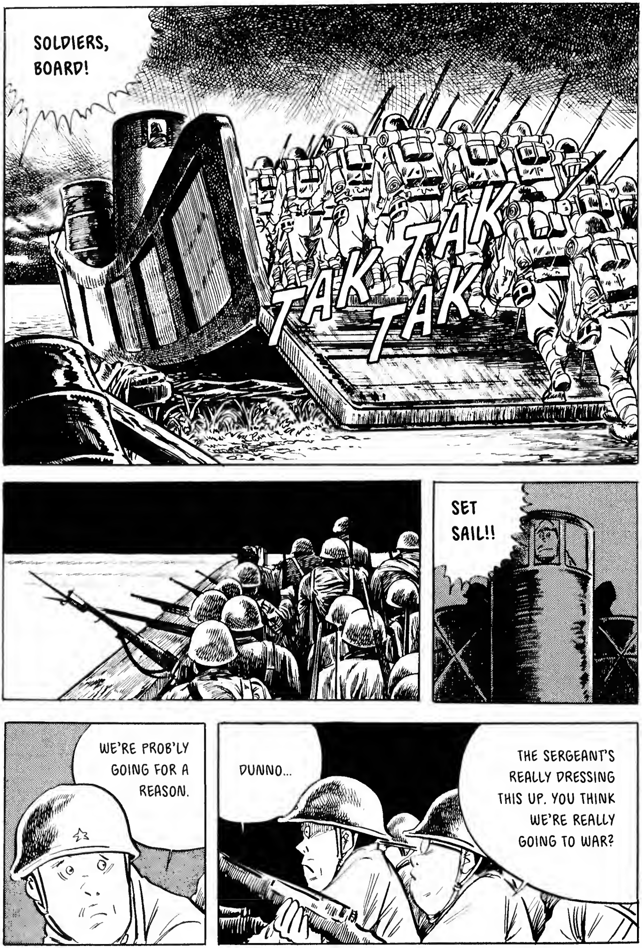

...SAY, HOW WAS IT YESTERDAY?
FIVE MINUTES LEFT— MAYBE TWO OR THREE GUYS COULD'VE GOTTEN SOME, BUT SEVENTY OR SO WERE WAITING THERE.
MOST OF US GOT NOTHING BUT THE "PROSTITUTE'S LAMENT."
HUH, TOO BAD.
YOU HAD YOUR HEAD STUCK UP YOUR ASS.
NOW YOU'LL DIE A VIRGIN.
ME, TOO.
BUT MIURA, YOU DID IT THREE TIMES!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DIDN'T GO THREE TIMES.
FALL IN!

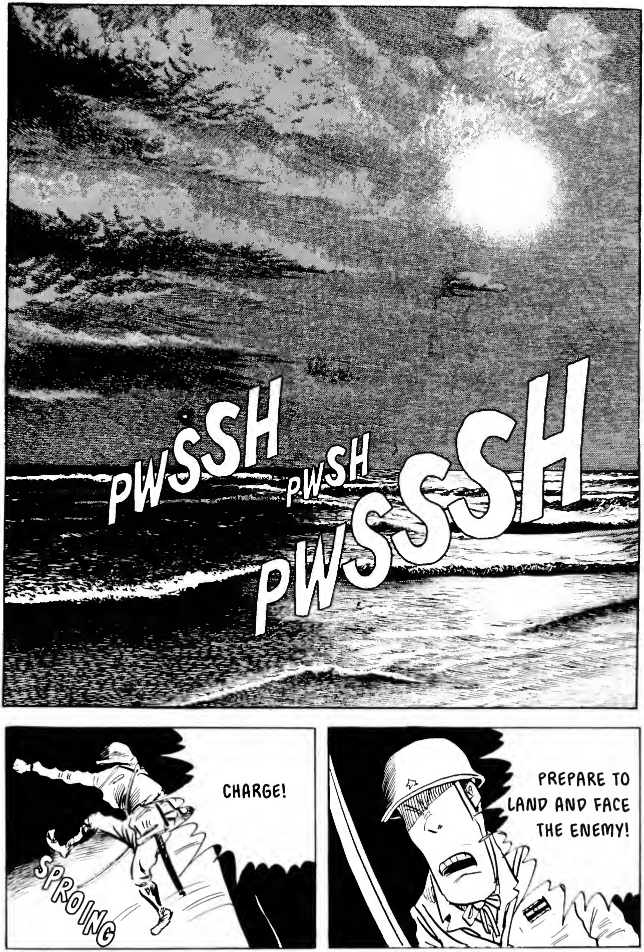

NUMBERS!
ONE!
TWO!
THE COLONEL'S CALLED EVERYONE IN. MOVE OUT!
I THOUGHT WE WERE SHIPPING OUT.
ATTEN-TION!
SALUTE TO THE FRONT!
SALUTE!

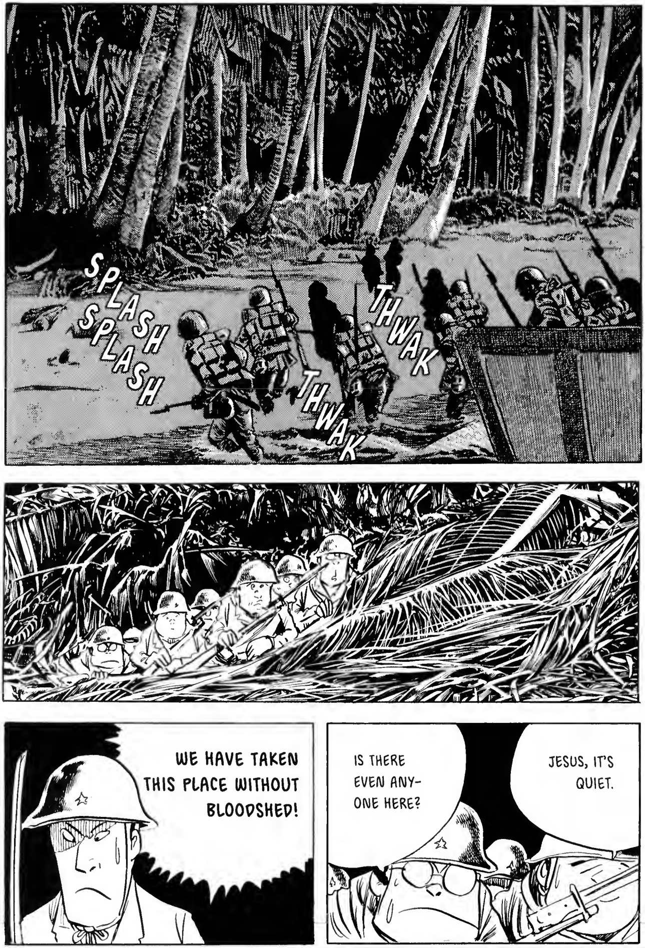

I AM LIEUTENANT-COLONEL TADOKORO. I WILL COMMAND THIS BATTALION IN BAIEN.
WHEN THE GREAT DAI-NANKO* FOUGHT THE REBELS AT MINATO RIVER, FIVE HUNDRED BRAVE MEN DIED IN BATTLE ALONGSIDE HIM.
WE WILL BE MOVING OUT FOR BAIEN THIS EVENING.
GENTLEMEN, FIGHT COURAGEOUSLY AND WITH HONOR!
ASSEMBLED HERE TODAY, WE ARE JUST LIKE THOSE FIVE HUNDRED.
SALUTE TO THE FRONT!

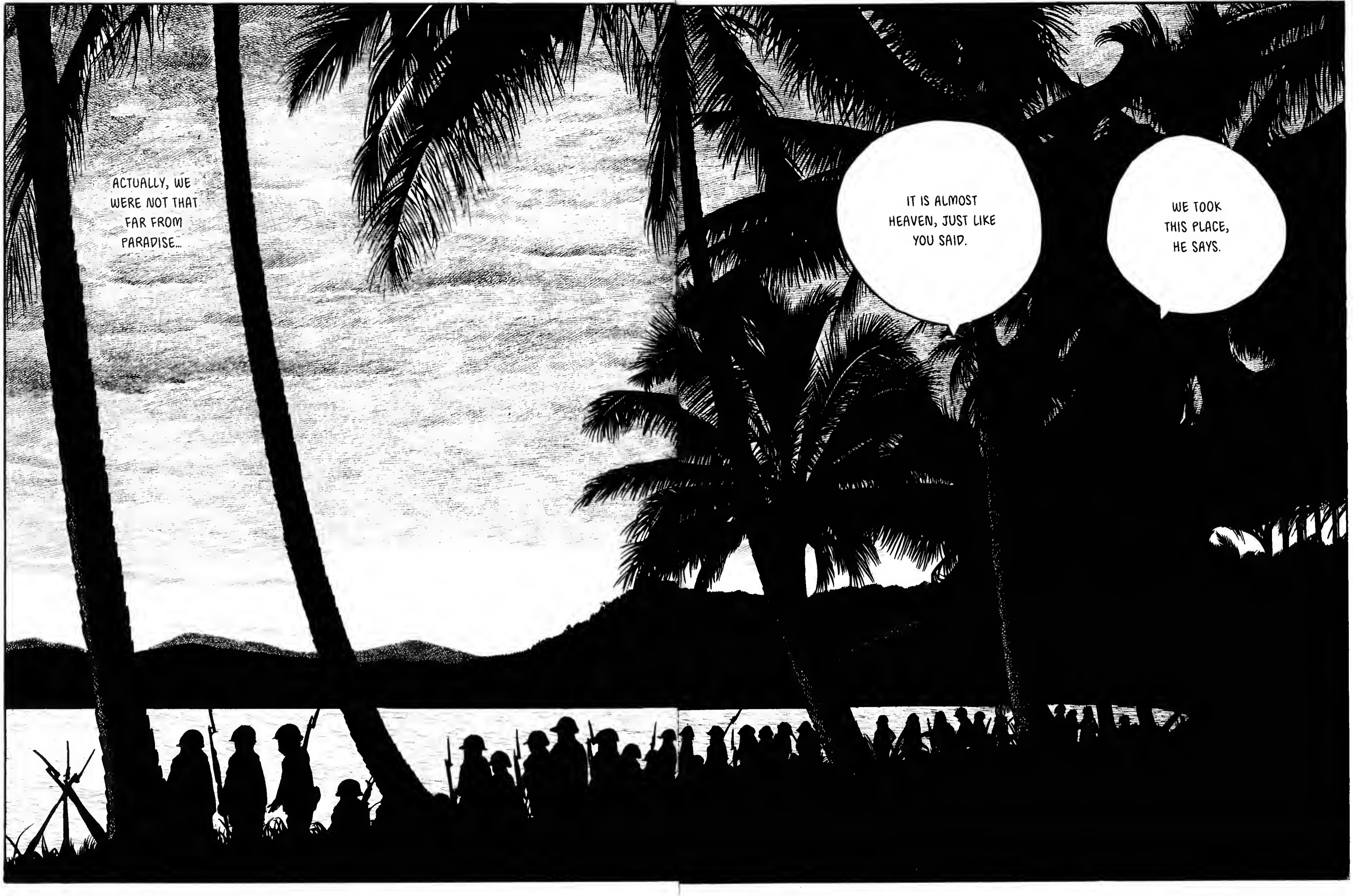
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.


KLAK
KLAK
PRESENT ARMS!
OUR PLATOON WILL OCCUPY BAIEN AS THE ADVANCE PARTY.
CHAK
CHAK
FIX BAYONETS!

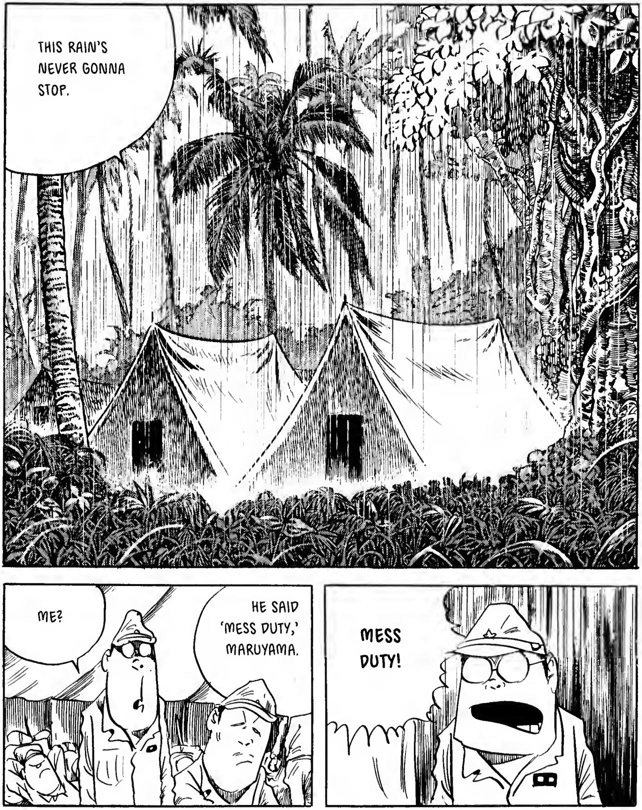

SOLDIERS, BOARD!
TAK TAK TAK TAK
SET SAIL!!
WE'RE PROB'LY GOING FOR A REASON.
THE SERGEANT'S REALLY DRESSING THIS UP. YOU THINK WE'RE REALLY GOING TO WAR?
DUNNO...

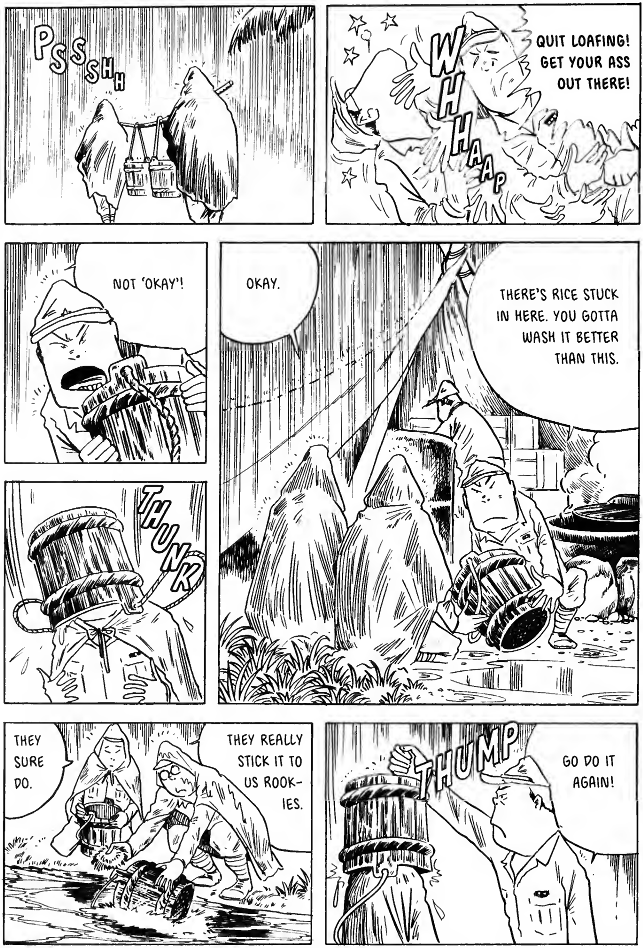

PWSSH
PWSH
PWSSSH
SPROING
CHARGE!
PREPARE TO LAND AND FACE THE ENEMY!

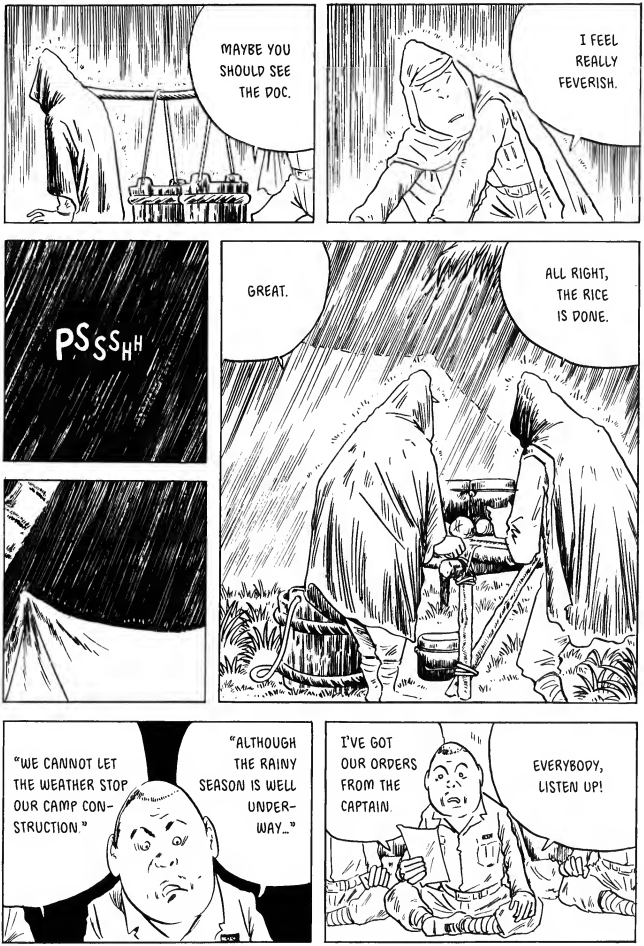

SPLASH
SPLASH
THWAK
THWAK
WE HAVE TAKEN THIS PLACE WITHOUT BLOODSHED!
IS THERE EVEN ANYONE HERE?
JESUS, IT'S QUIET.

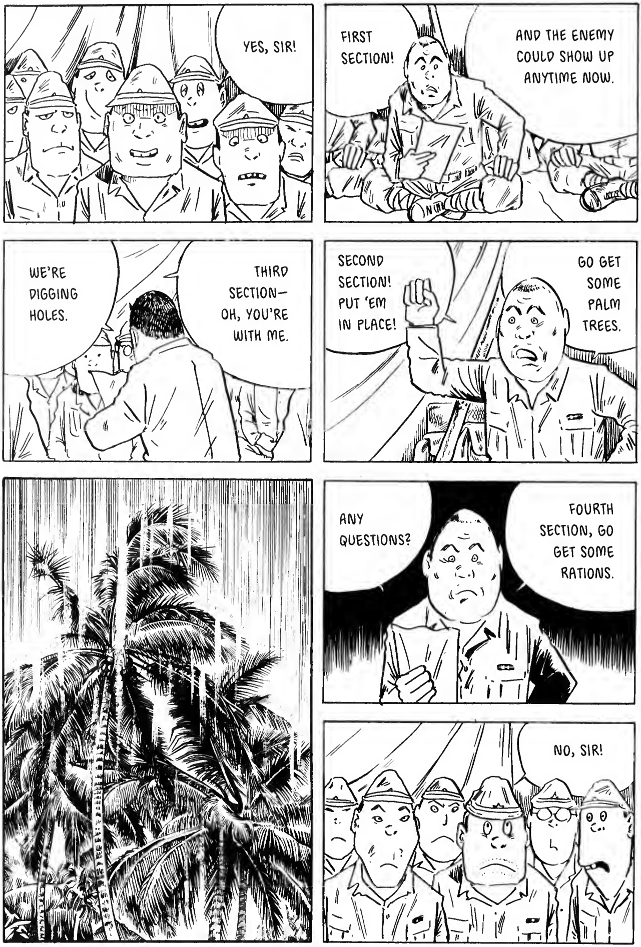

WE TOOK THIS PLACE, HE SAYS.
IT IS ALMOST HEAVEN, JUST LIKE YOU SAID.
ACTUALLY, WE WERE NOT THAT FAR FROM PARADISE...

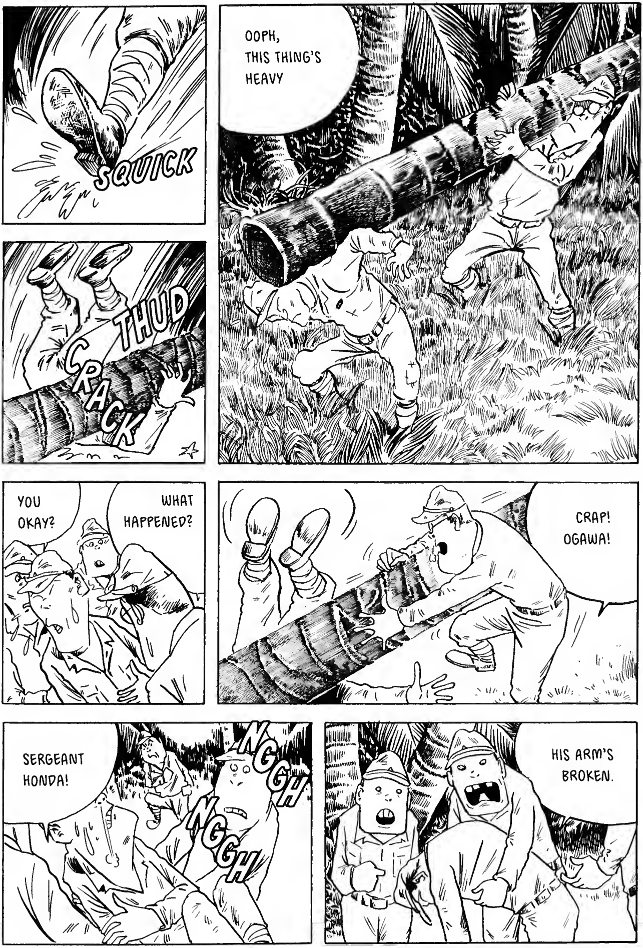
RAIN IN BAIEN

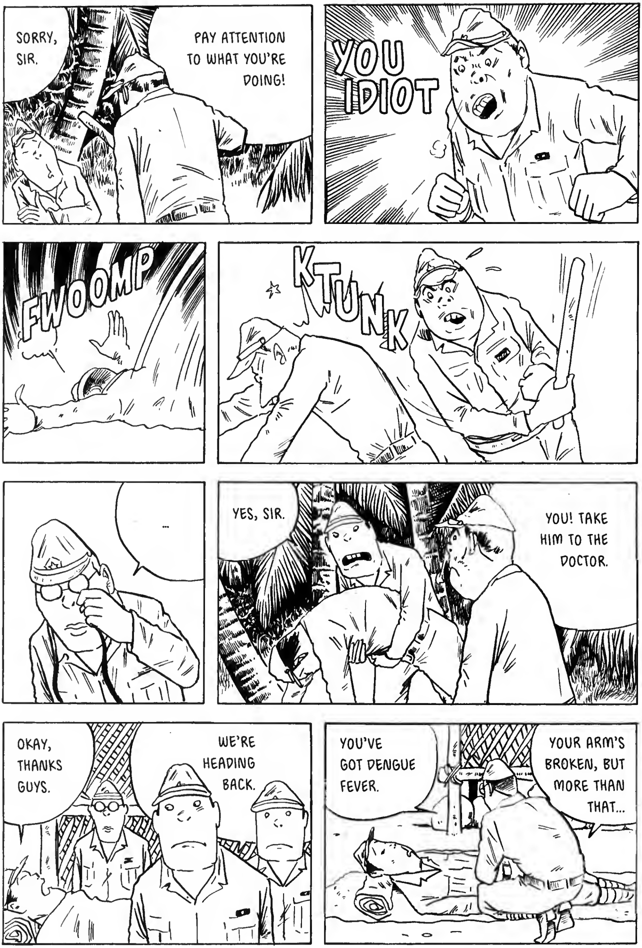

THIS RAIN'S NEVER GONNA STOP.
ME?
HE SAID 'MESS DUTY,' MARUYAMA.
MESS DUTY!

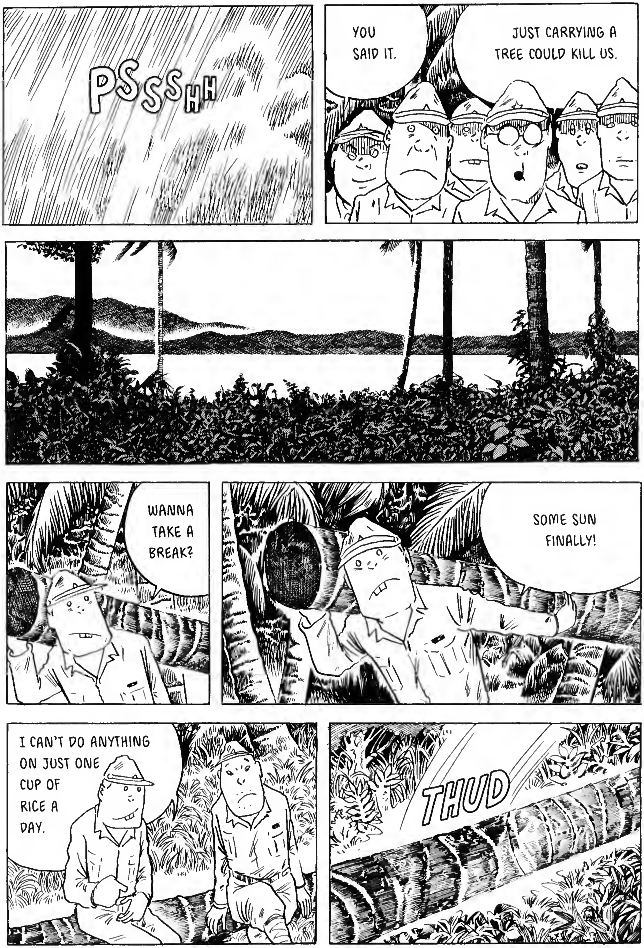

PSSSHH
WHHAAP
QUIT LOAFING! GET YOUR ASS OUT THERE!
THERE'S RICE STUCK IN HERE. YOU GOTTA WASH IT BETTER THAN THIS.
OKAY.
NOT 'OKAY'!
THUNK
THEY REALLY STICK IT TO US ROOKIES.
THEY SURE DO.
THUMP
GO DO IT AGAIN!

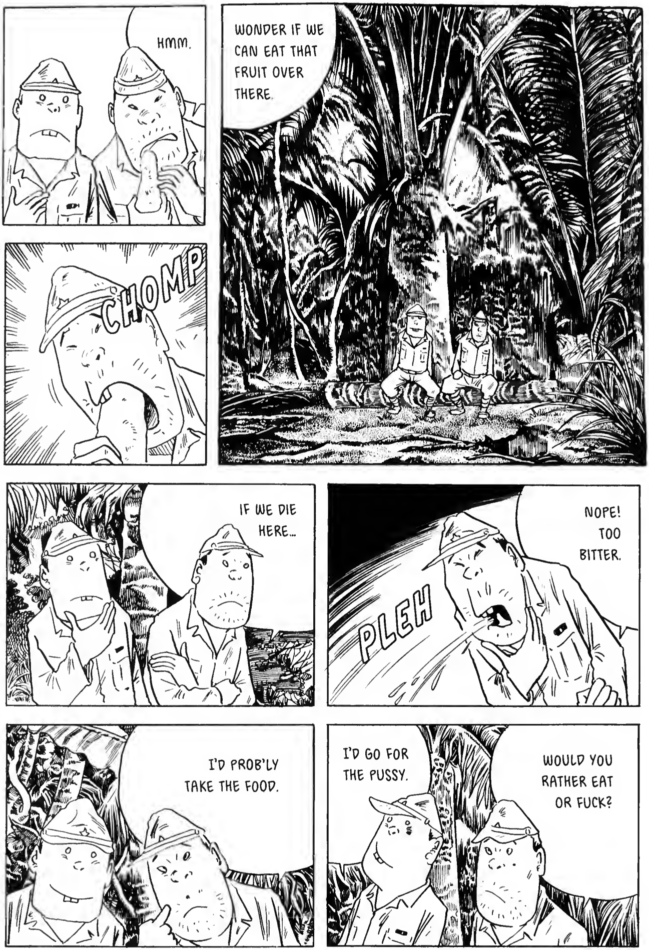

I FEEL REALLY FEVERISH.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD SEE THE DOC.
ALL RIGHT, THE RICE IS DONE.
GREAT.
PSSSHH
EVERYBODY, LISTEN UP!
I'VE GOT OUR ORDERS FROM THE CAPTAIN.
"ALTHOUGH THE RAINY SEASON IS WELL UNDERWAY..."
"WE CANNOT LET THE WEATHER STOP OUR CAMP CONSTRUCTION."

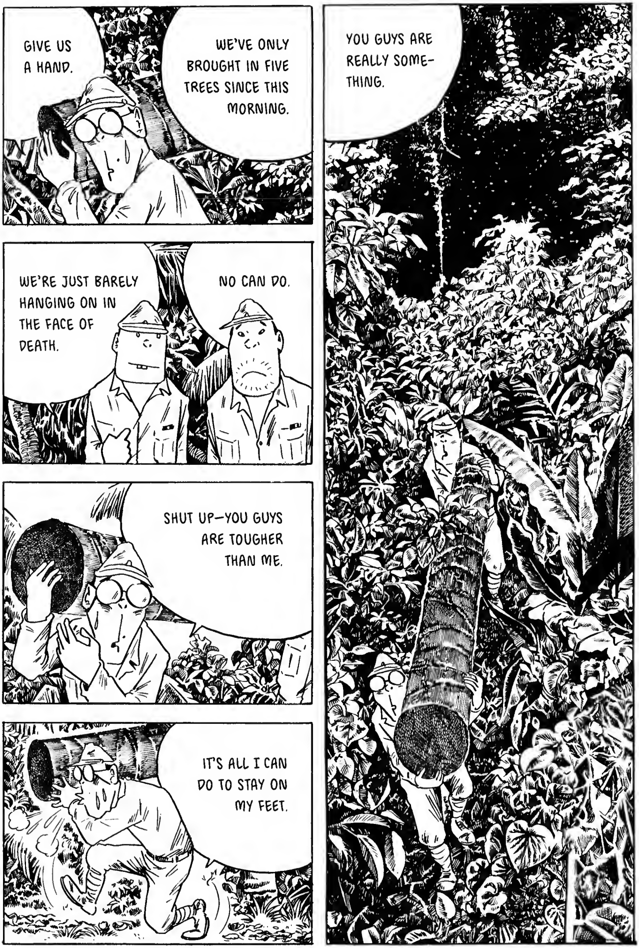

YES, SIR!
AND THE ENEMY COULD SHOW UP ANYTIME NOW.
FIRST SECTION!
GO GET SOME PALM TREES.
SECOND SECTION! PUT 'EM IN PLACE!
THIRD SECTION— OH, YOU'RE WITH ME.
WE'RE DIGGING HOLES.
FOURTH SECTION, GO GET SOME RATIONS.
ANY QUESTIONS?
NO, SIR!

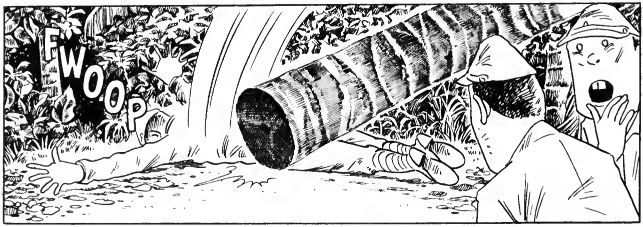

SQUICK
OOPH, THIS THING'S HEAVY
THUD
CRACK
YOU OKAY?
WHAT HAPPENED?
CRAP! OGAWA!
SERGEANT HONDA!
NGGH
NGGH
HIS ARM'S BROKEN.

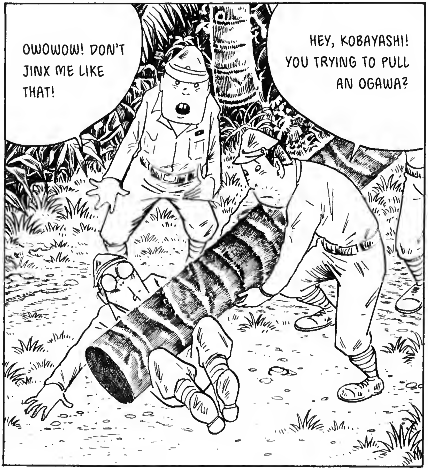

SORRY, SIR.
PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
YOU IDIOT
FWOOMP
KTUNK
...
YES, SIR.
YOU! TAKE HIM TO THE DOCTOR.
OKAY, THANKS GUYS.
WE'RE HEADING BACK.
YOU'VE GOT DENGUE FEVER.
YOUR ARM'S BROKEN, BUT MORE THAN THAT...

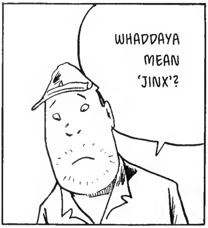

PSSSHH
YOU SAID IT.
JUST CARRYING A TREE COULD KILL US.
WANNA TAKE A BREAK?
SOME SUN FINALLY!
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ON JUST ONE CUP OF RICE A DAY.
THUD

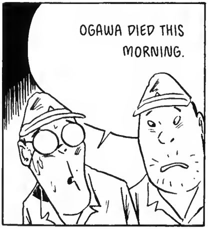

WONDER IF WE CAN EAT THAT FRUIT OVER THERE.
HMM.
CHOMP
NOPE! TOO BITTER.
PLEH
IF WE DIE HERE...
WOULD YOU RATHER EAT OR FUCK?
I'D GO FOR THE PUSSY.
I'D PROB'LY TAKE THE FOOD.

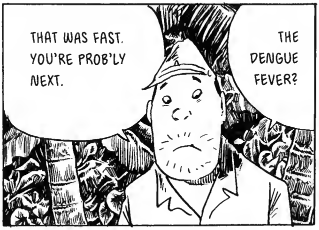

GIVE US A HAND.
WE'VE ONLY BROUGHT IN FIVE TREES SINCE THIS MORNING.
WE'RE JUST BARELY HANGING ON IN THE FACE OF DEATH.
NO CAN DO.
SHUT UP—YOU GUYS ARE TOUGHER THAN ME.
IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO STAY ON MY FEET.
YOU GUYS ARE REALLY SOMETHING.

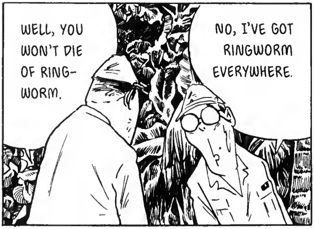

FWOOP

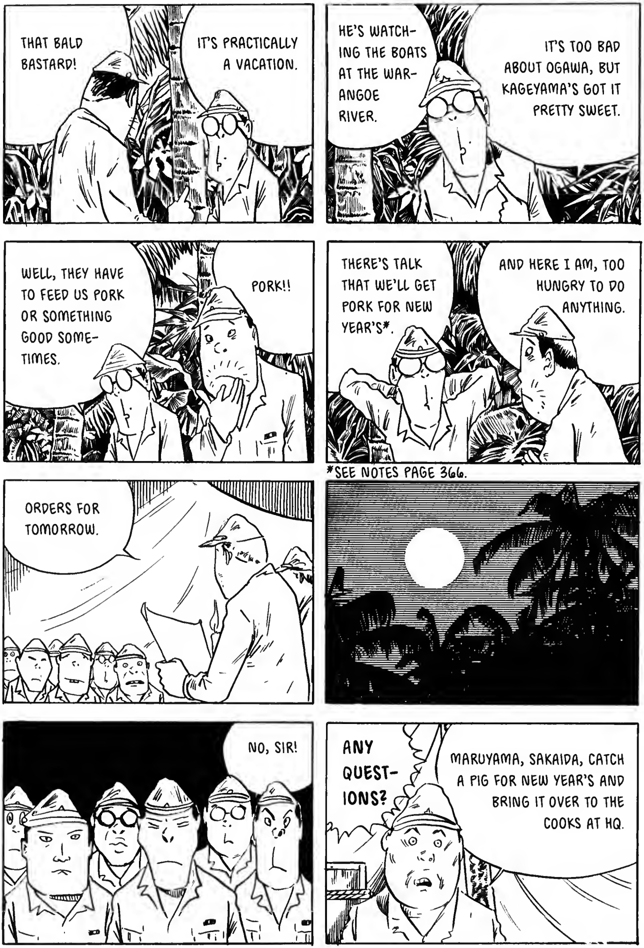

HEY, KOBAYASHI! YOU TRYING TO PULL AN OGAWA?
OWOWOW! DON'T JINX ME LIKE THAT!


WHADDAYA MEAN 'JINX'?

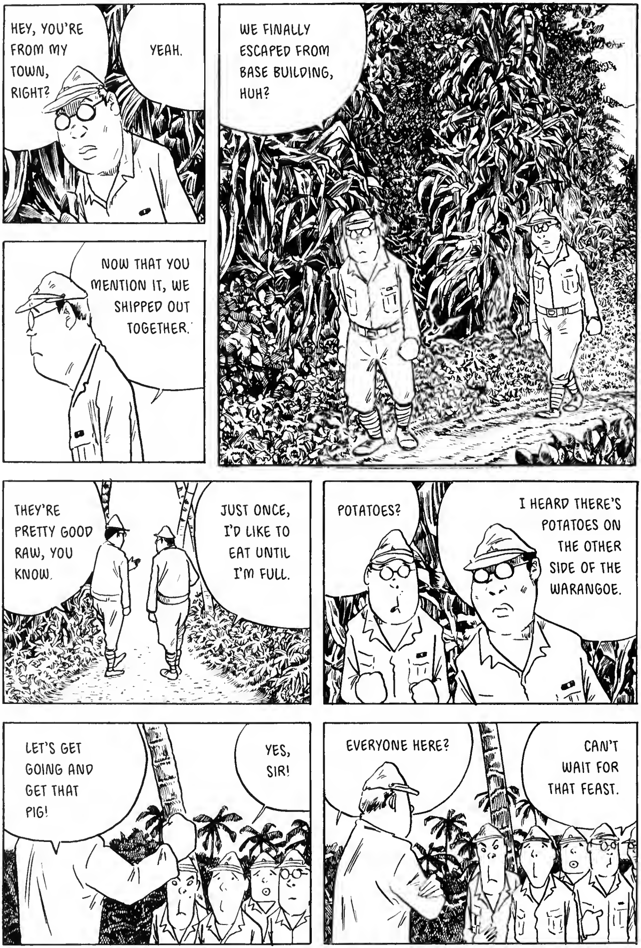

OGAWA DIED THIS MORNING.

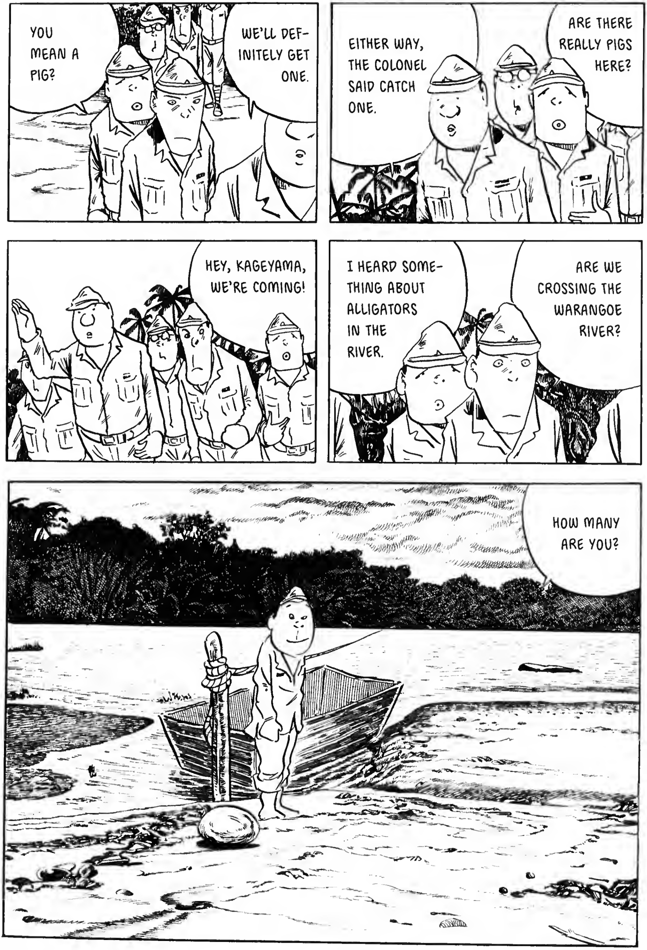

THE DENGUE FEVER?
THAT WAS FAST. YOU'RE PROB'LY NEXT.

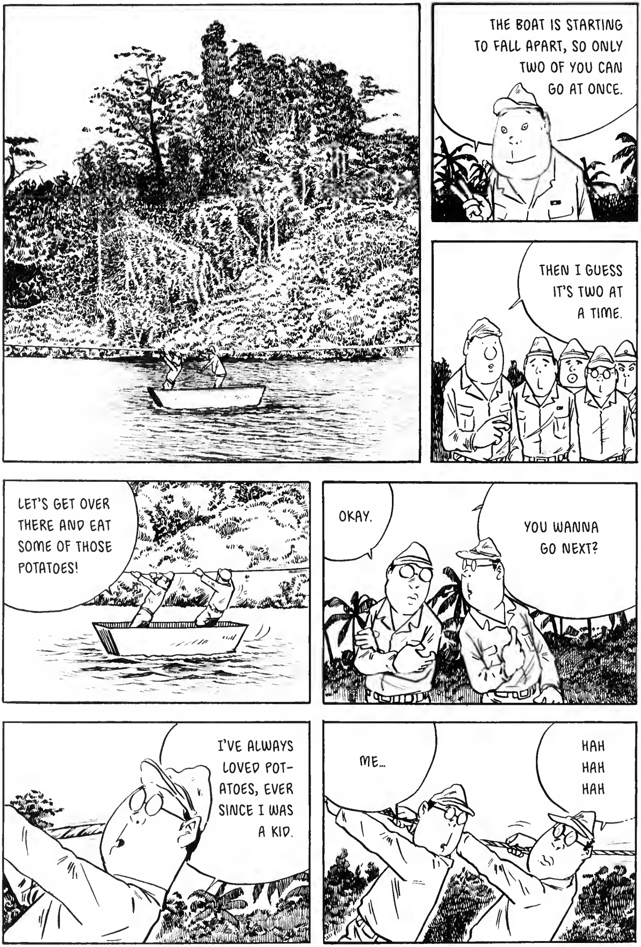

NO, I'VE GOT RINGWORM EVERYWHERE.
WELL, YOU WON'T DIE OF RINGWORM.

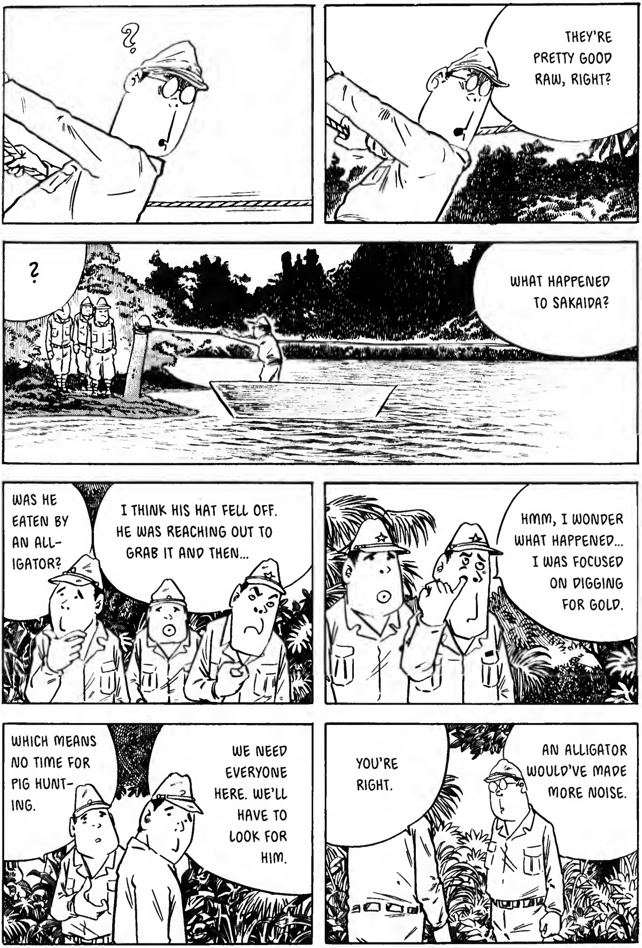

IT'S TOO BAD ABOUT OGAWA, BUT KAGEYAMA'S GOT IT PRETTY SWEET.
HE'S WATCHING THE BOATS AT THE WARANGOE RIVER.
IT'S PRACTICALLY A VACATION.
THAT BALD BASTARD!
AND HERE I AM, TOO HUNGRY TO DO ANYTHING.
THERE'S TALK THAT WE'LL GET PORK FOR NEW YEAR'S*.
PORK!!
WELL, THEY HAVE TO FEED US PORK OR SOMETHING GOOD SOMETIMES.
ORDERS FOR TOMORROW.
MARUYAMA, SAKAIDA, CATCH A PIG FOR NEW YEAR'S AND BRING IT OVER TO THE COOKS AT HQ.
ANY QUESTIONS?
NO, SIR!

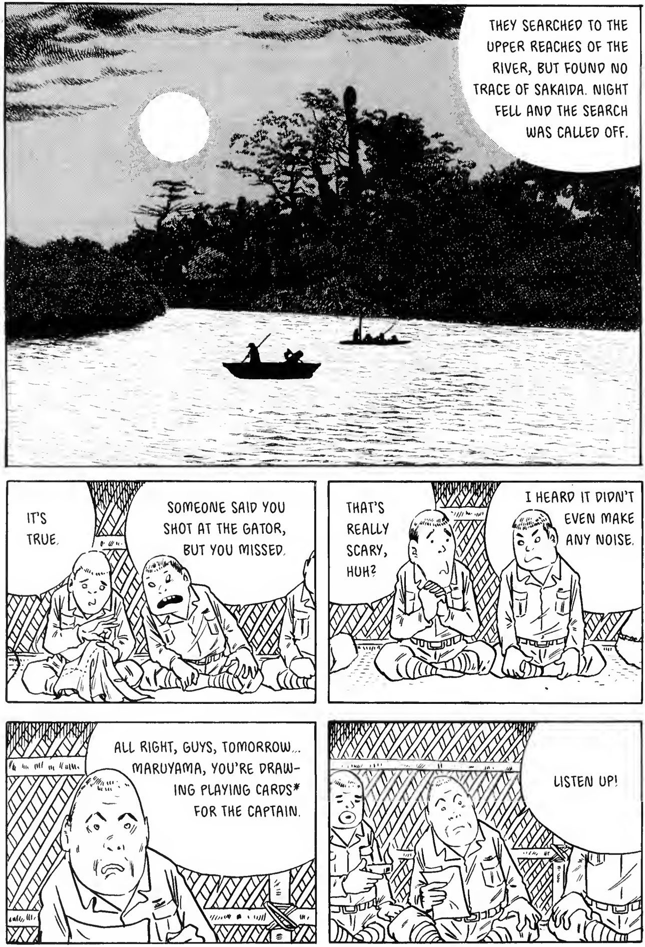
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.


HEY, YOU'RE FROM MY TOWN, RIGHT?
YEAH.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, WE SHIPPED OUT TOGETHER.
WE FINALLY ESCAPED FROM BASE BUILDING, HUH?
THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD RAW, YOU KNOW.
JUST ONCE, I'D LIKE TO EAT UNTIL I'M FULL.
POTATOES?
I HEARD THERE'S POTATOES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WARANGOE.
LET'S GET GOING AND GET THAT PIG!
YES, SIR!
EVERYONE HERE?
CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT FEAST.

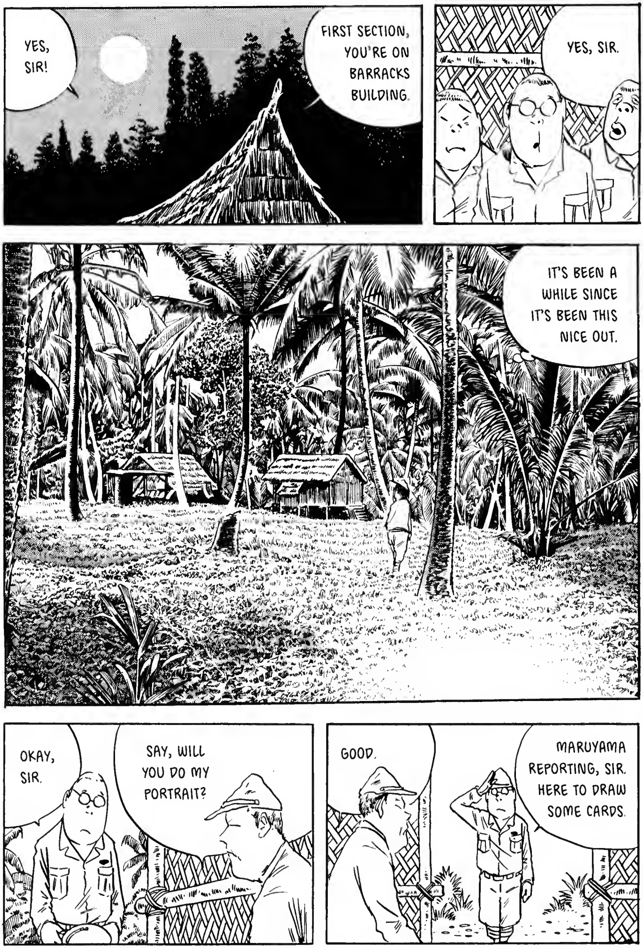

ARE THERE REALLY PIGS HERE?
EITHER WAY, THE COLONEL SAID CATCH ONE.
WE'LL DEFINITELY GET ONE.
YOU MEAN A PIG?
ARE WE CROSSING THE WARANGOE RIVER?
I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT ALLIGATORS IN THE RIVER.
HEY, KAGEYAMA, WE'RE COMING!
HOW MANY ARE YOU?

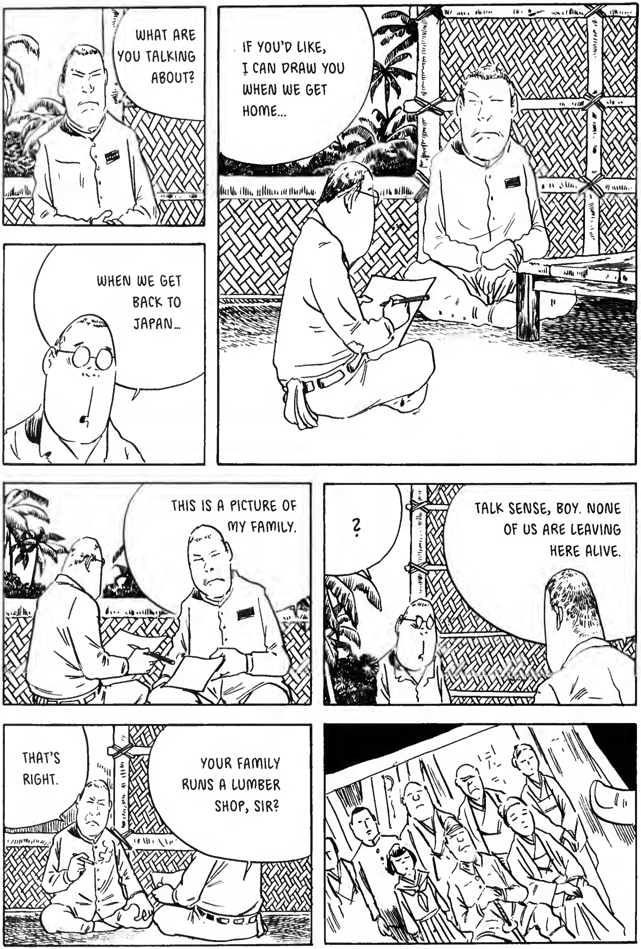

THE BOAT IS STARTING TO FALL APART, SO ONLY TWO OF YOU CAN GO AT ONCE.
THEN I GUESS IT'S TWO AT A TIME.
LET'S GET OVER THERE AND EAT SOME OF THOSE POTATOES!
OKAY.
YOU WANNA GO NEXT?
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED POTATOES, EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
ME...
HAH HAH HAH

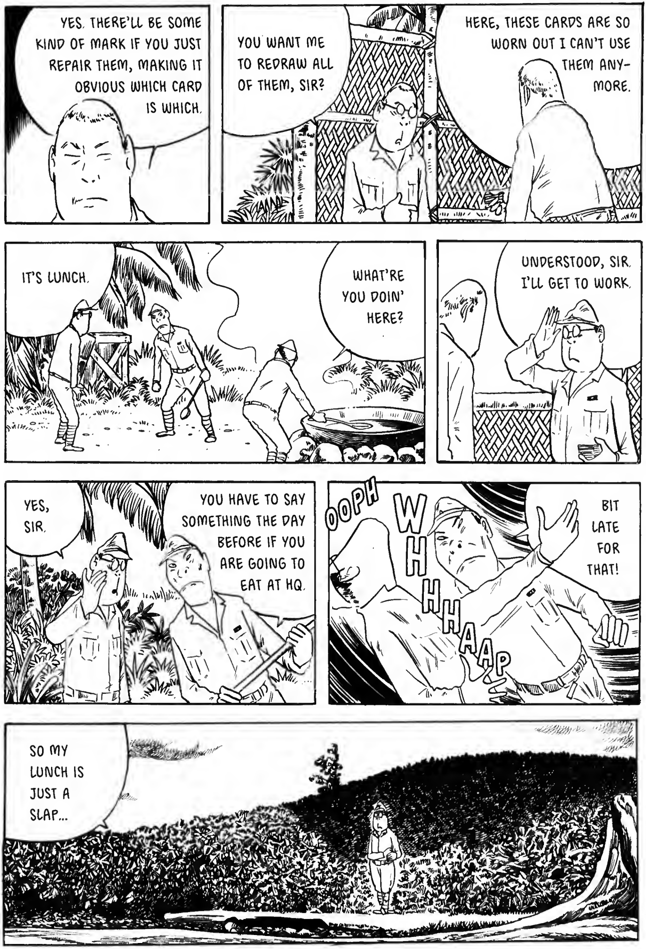

?
THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD RAW, RIGHT?
?
WHAT HAPPENED TO SAKAIDA?
WAS HE EATEN BY AN ALLIGATOR?
I THINK HIS HAT FELL OFF. HE WAS REACHING OUT TO GRAB IT AND THEN...
HMM, I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED... I WAS FOCUSED ON DIGGING FOR GOLD.
WHICH MEANS NO TIME FOR PIG HUNTING.
WE NEED EVERYONE HERE. WE'LL HAVE TO LOOK FOR HIM.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
AN ALLIGATOR WOULD'VE MADE MORE NOISE.

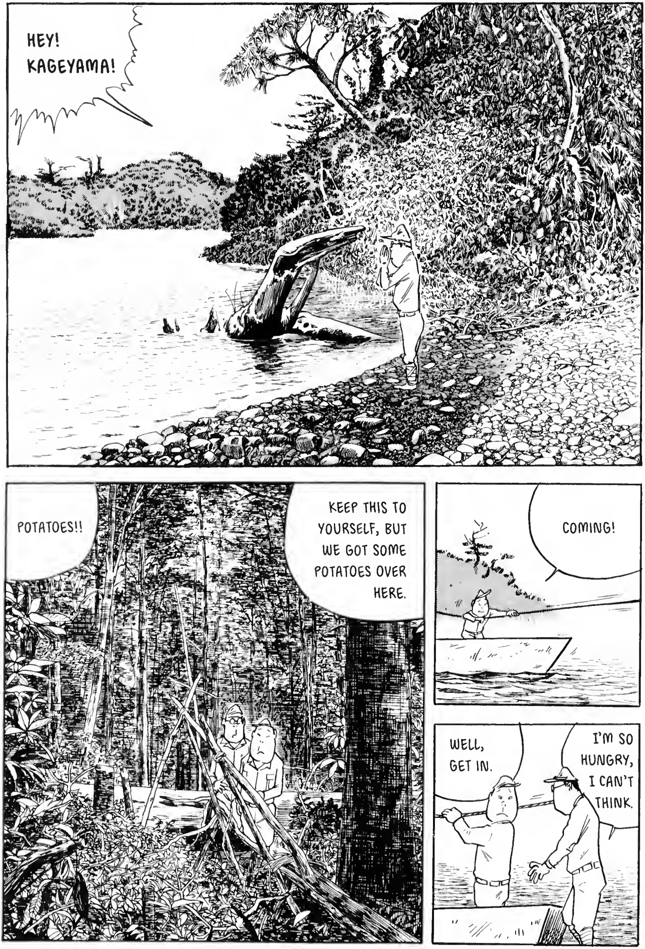

THEY SEARCHED TO THE UPPER REACHES OF THE RIVER, BUT FOUND NO TRACE OF SAKAIDA. NIGHT FELL AND THE SEARCH WAS CALLED OFF.
I HEARD IT DIDN'T EVEN MAKE ANY NOISE.
THAT'S REALLY SCARY, HUH?
SOMEONE SAID YOU SHOT AT THE GATOR, BUT YOU MISSED.
IT'S TRUE.
LISTEN UP!
ALL RIGHT, GUYS, TOMORROW... MARUYAMA, YOU'RE DRAWING PLAYING CARDS* FOR THE CAPTAIN.

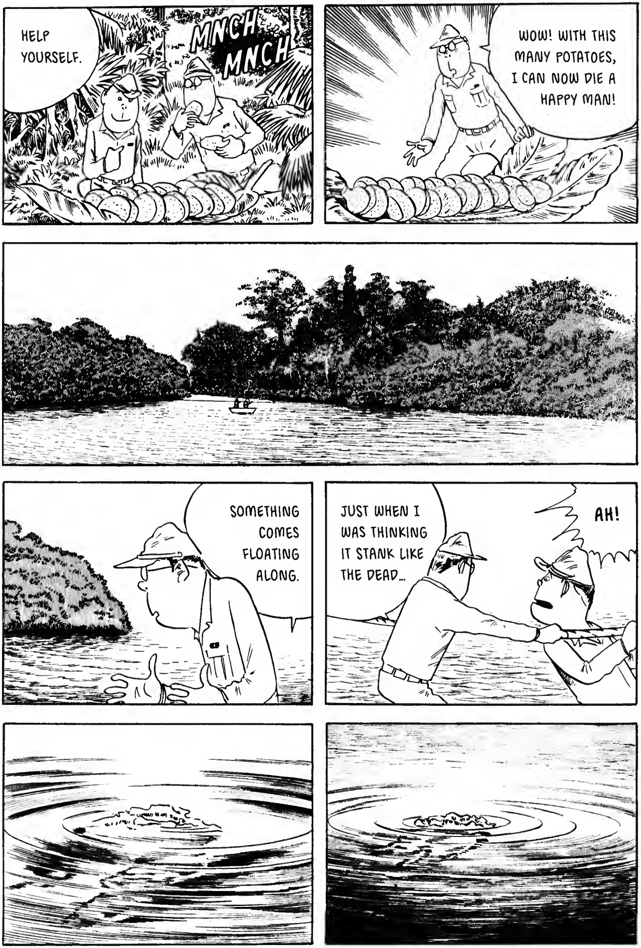
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.

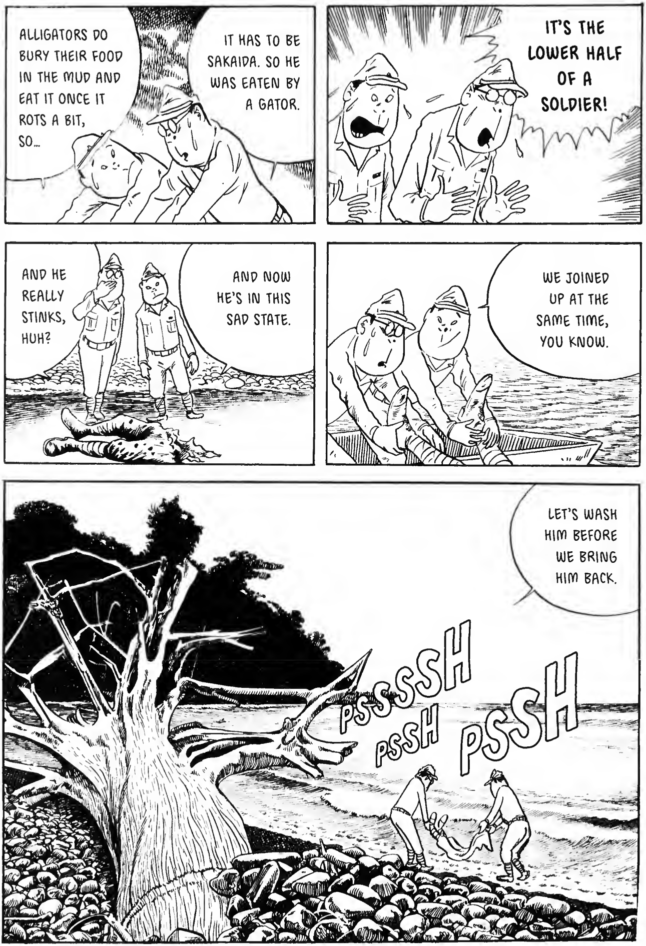

YES, SIR.
FIRST SECTION, YOU'RE ON BARRACKS BUILDING.
YES, SIR!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE IT'S BEEN THIS NICE OUT.
MARUYAMA REPORTING, SIR. HERE TO DRAW SOME CARDS.
GOOD.
SAY, WILL YOU DO MY PORTRAIT?
OKAY, SIR.


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN DRAW YOU WHEN WE GET HOME...
WHEN WE GET BACK TO JAPAN...
THIS IS A PICTURE OF MY FAMILY.
?
TALK SENSE, BOY. NONE OF US ARE LEAVING HERE ALIVE.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOUR FAMILY RUNS A LUMBER SHOP, SIR?

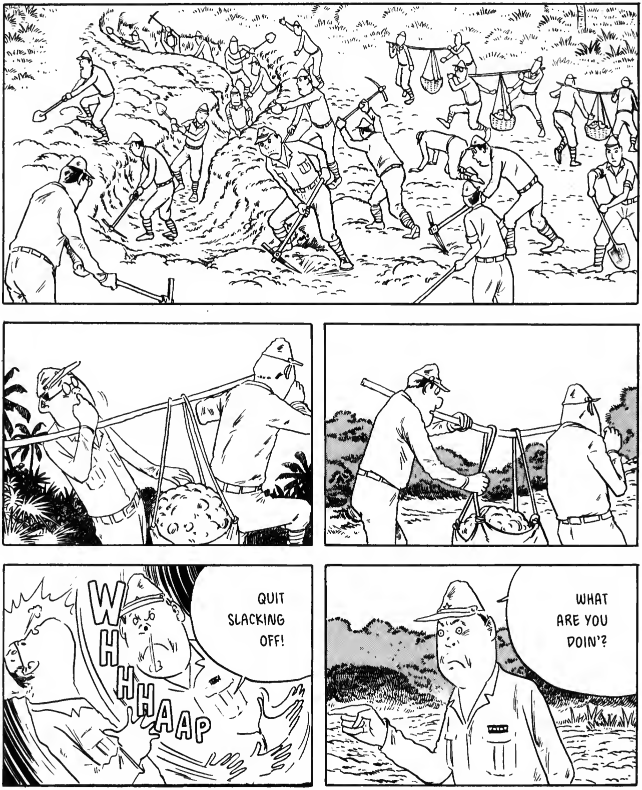

HERE, THESE CARDS ARE SO WORN OUT I CAN'T USE THEM ANYMORE.
YOU WANT ME TO REDRAW ALL OF THEM, SIR?
YES. THERE'LL BE SOME KIND OF MARK IF YOU JUST REPAIR THEM, MAKING IT OBVIOUS WHICH CARD IS WHICH.
UNDERSTOOD, SIR. I'LL GET TO WORK.
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE?
IT'S LUNCH.
YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING THE DAY BEFORE IF YOU ARE GOING TO EAT AT HQ.
YES, SIR.
BIT LATE FOR THAT!
WHHHAAAP
OOPH
SO MY LUNCH IS JUST A SLAP...

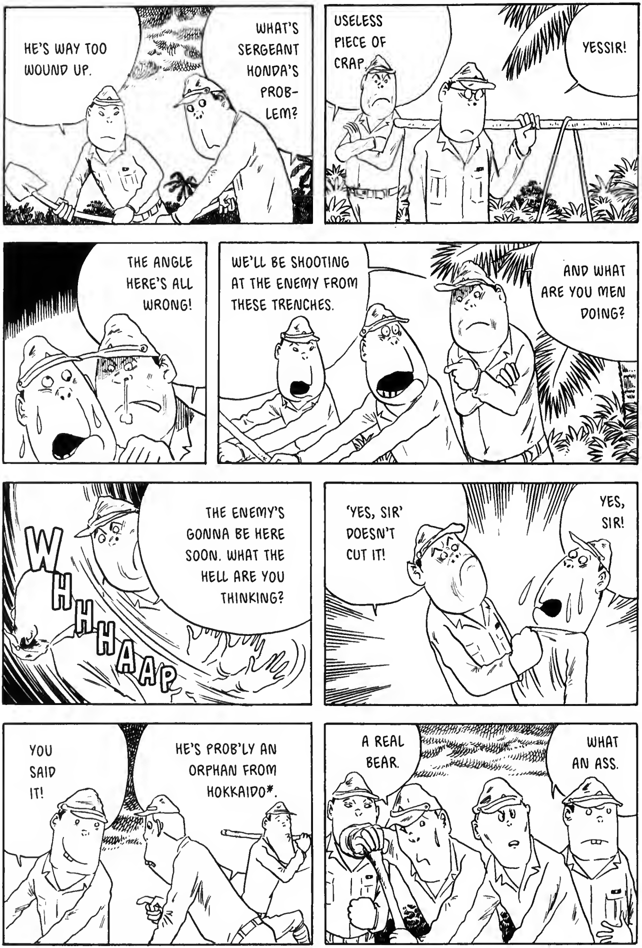

HEY! KAGEYAMA!
COMING!
I'M SO HUNGRY, I CAN'T THINK.
WELL, GET IN.
KEEP THIS TO YOURSELF, BUT WE GOT SOME POTATOES OVER HERE.
POTATOES!!


HELP YOURSELF.
MNCH MNCH
WOW! WITH THIS MANY POTATOES, I CAN NOW DIE A HAPPY MAN!
SOMETHING COMES FLOATING ALONG.
JUST WHEN I WAS THINKING IT STANK LIKE THE DEAD...
AH!

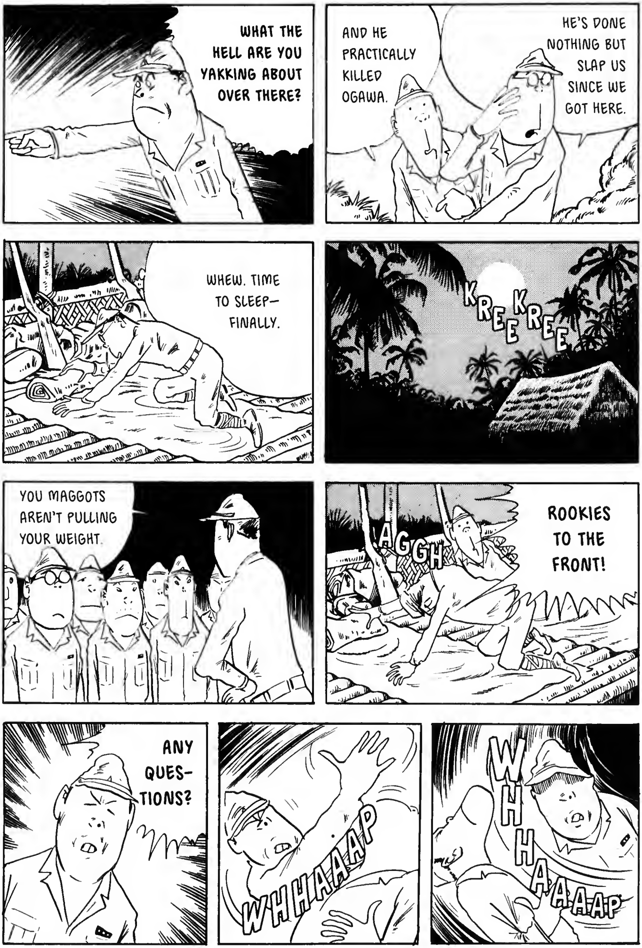

ALLIGATORS DO BURY THEIR FOOD IN THE MUD AND EAT IT ONCE IT ROTS A BIT, SO...
IT HAS TO BE SAKAIDA. SO HE WAS EATEN BY A GATOR.
IT'S THE LOWER HALF OF A SOLDIER!
AND HE REALLY STINKS, HUH?
AND NOW HE'S IN THIS SAD STATE.
WE JOINED UP AT THE SAME TIME, YOU KNOW.
LET'S WASH HIM BEFORE WE BRING HIM BACK.
PSSSSH
PSSH
PSSH

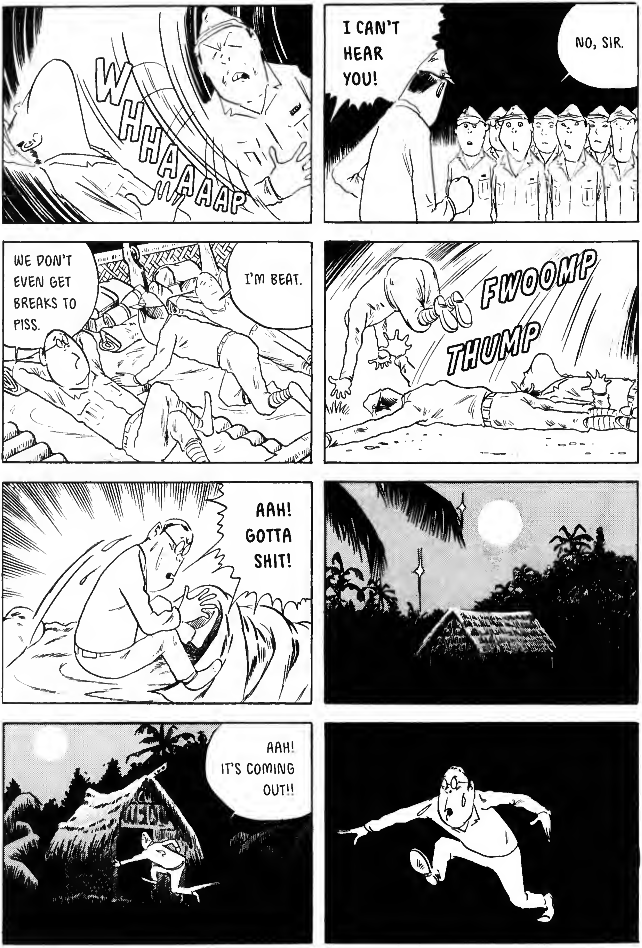
HARD LABOUR AND A FEW SLAPS

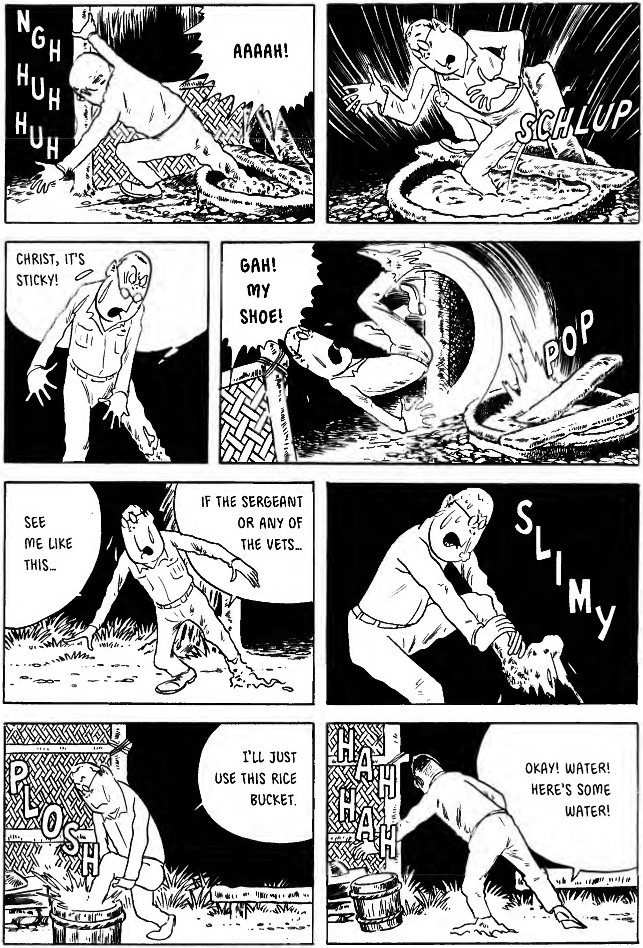

WHHHAAP
QUIT SLACKING OFF!
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?

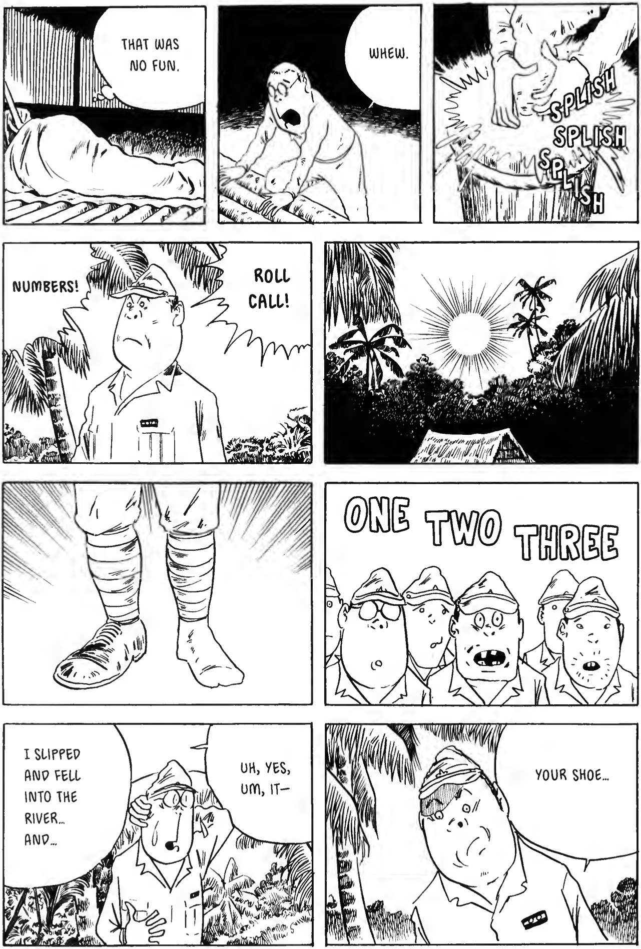

USELESS PIECE OF CRAP.
YESSIR!
WHAT'S SERGEANT HONDA'S PROB-LEM?
HE'S WAY TOO WOUND UP.
AND WHAT ARE YOU MEN DOING?
WE'LL BE SHOOTING AT THE ENEMY FROM THESE TRENCHES.
THE ANGLE HERE'S ALL WRONG!
YES, SIR!
'YES, SIR' DOESN'T CUT IT!
WHHHAAP
THE ENEMY'S GONNA BE HERE SOON. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINKING?
WHAT AN ASS.
A REAL BEAR.
HE'S PROB'LY AN ORPHAN FROM HOKKAIDO*.
YOU SAID IT!

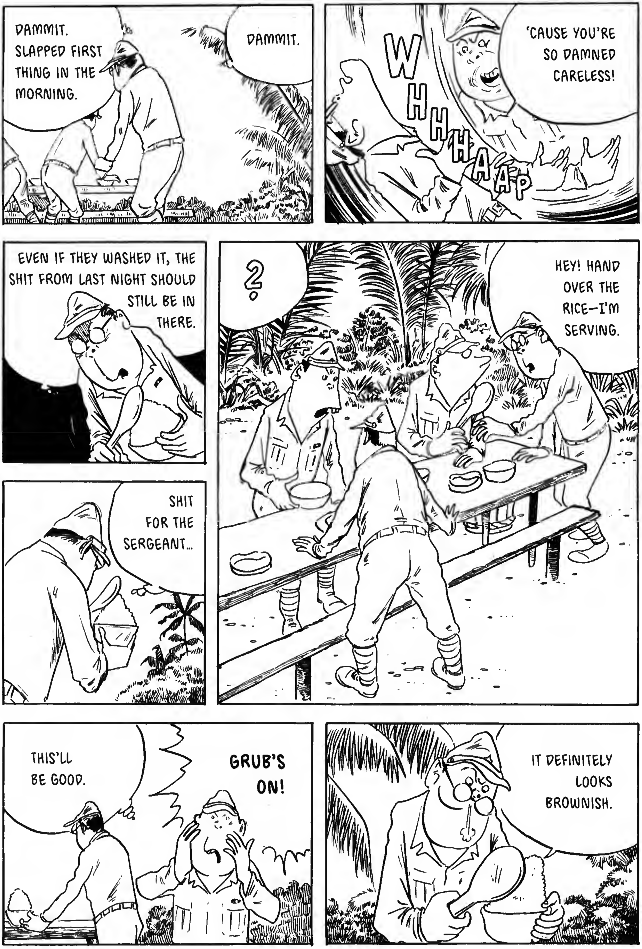
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.

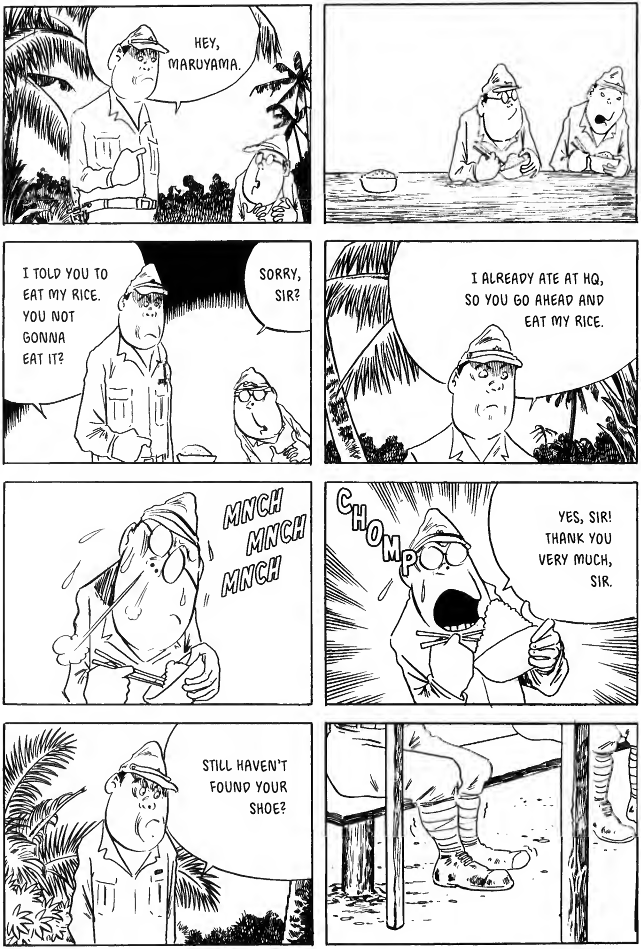

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU YAKKING ABOUT OVER THERE?
HE'S DONE NOTHING BUT SLAP US SINCE WE GOT HERE.
AND HE PRACTICALLY KILLED OGAWA.
WHEW. TIME TO SLEEP— FINALLY.
KREE KREE
YOU MAGGOTS AREN'T PULLING YOUR WEIGHT.
AGGH
ROOKIES TO THE FRONT!
ANY QUESTIONS?
WHHAAAP
WHHAAAAP

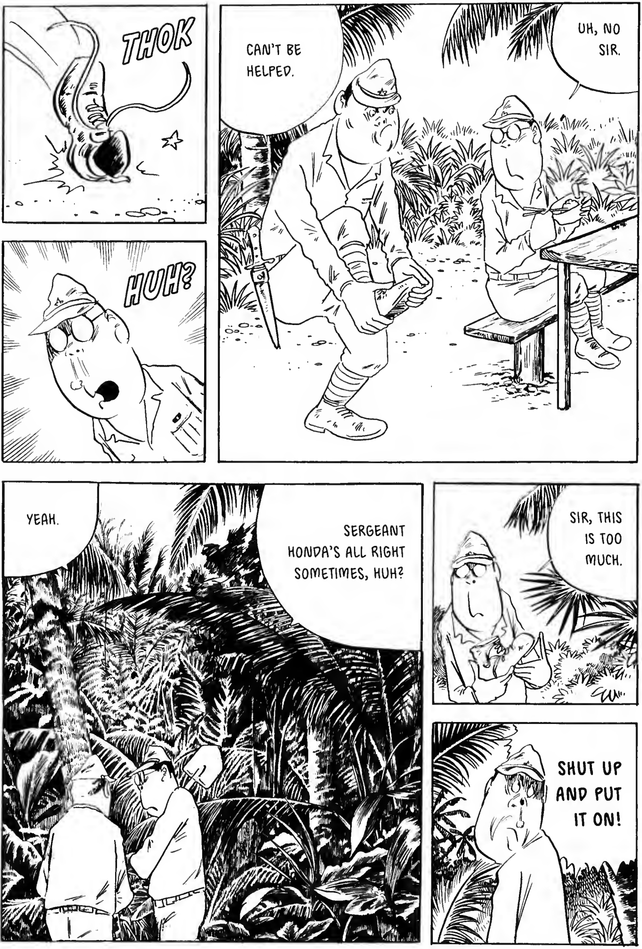

WHHAAAAAP
I CAN'T HEAR YOU!
NO, SIR.
WE DON'T EVEN GET BREAKS TO PISS.
I'M BEAT.
FWOOMP
THUMP
AAH! GOTTA SHIT!
AAH! IT'S COMING OUT!!

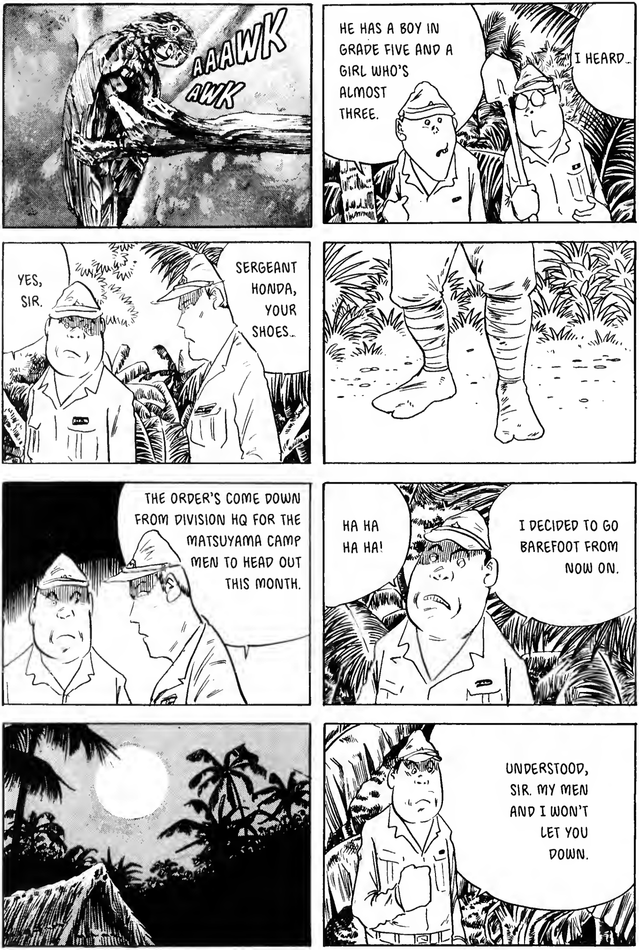

NGH HUH HUH
AAAAH!
SCHLUP
CHRIST, IT'S STICKY!
GAH! MY SHOE!
POP
SEE ME LIKE THIS...
IF THE SERGEANT OR ANY OF THE VETS...
SLIMY
PLOSH
I'LL JUST USE THIS RICE BUCKET.
HAH HAH HAH
OKAY! WATER! HERE'S SOME WATER!

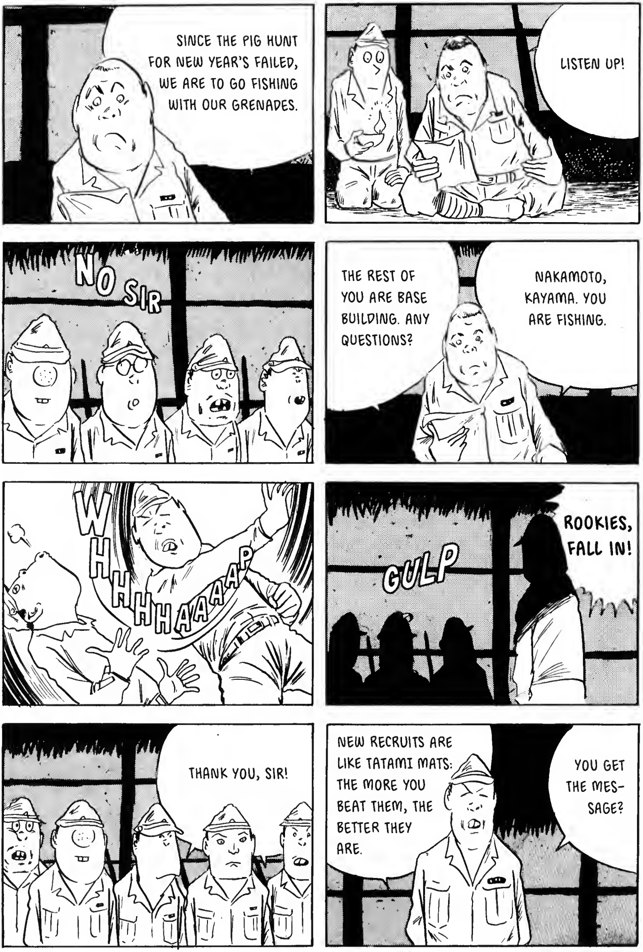

THAT WAS NO FUN.
WHEW.
SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH
ROLL CALL!
NUMBERS!
ONE TWO THREE
UH, YES, UM, IT—
I SLIPPED AND FELL INTO THE RIVER... AND...
YOUR SHOE...

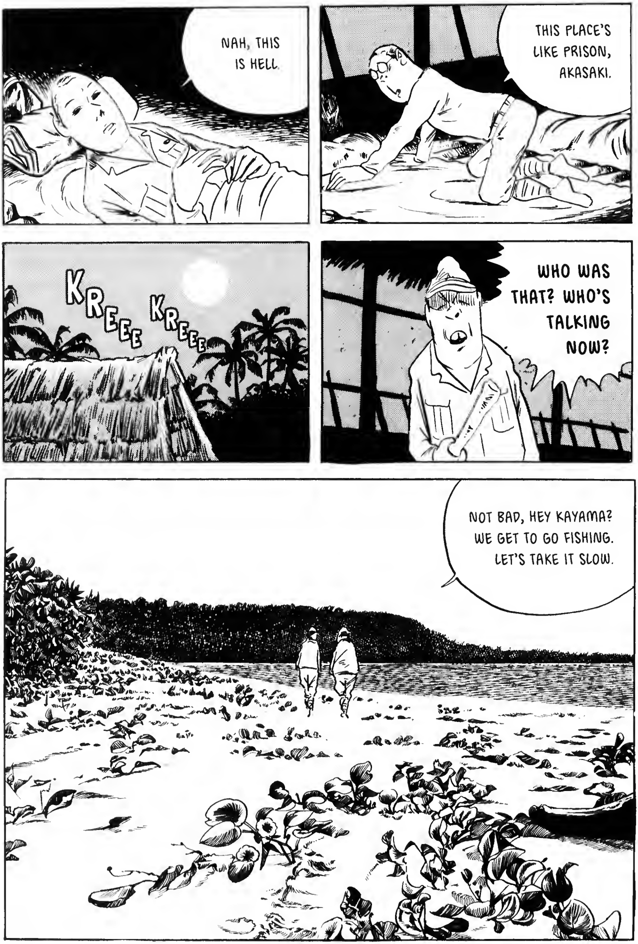

DAMMIT. SLAPPED FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
DAMMIT.
WHHHAAAP
'CAUSE YOU'RE SO DAMNED CARELESS!
EVEN IF THEY WASHED IT, THE SHIT FROM LAST NIGHT SHOULD STILL BE IN THERE.
SHIT FOR THE SERGEANT...
?
HEY! HAND OVER THE RICE—I'M SERVING.
THIS'LL BE GOOD.
GRUB'S ON!
IT DEFINITELY LOOKS BROWNISH.

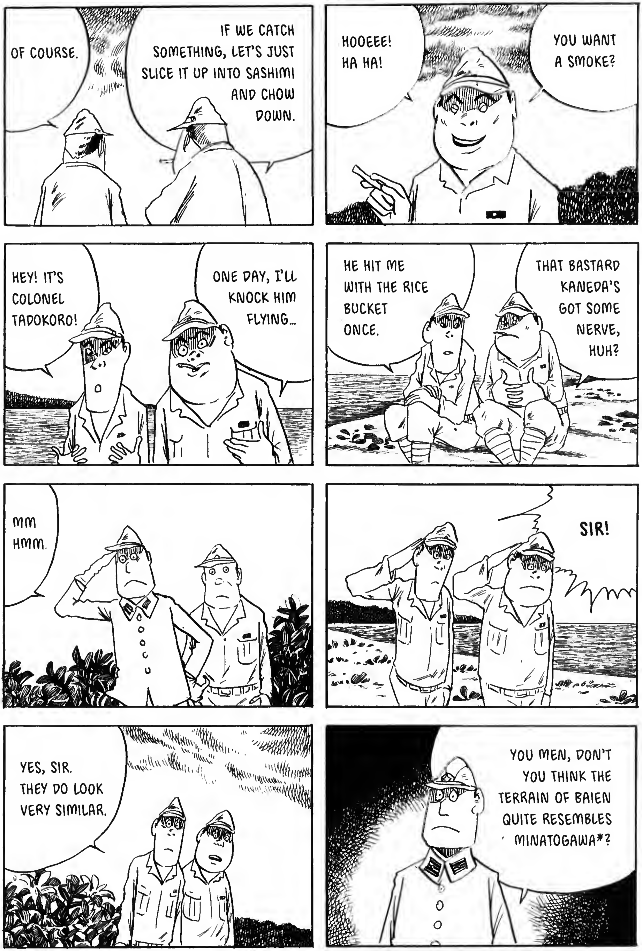

HEY, MARUYAMA.
I TOLD YOU TO EAT MY RICE. YOU NOT GONNA EAT IT?
SORRY, SIR?
I ALREADY ATE AT HQ, SO YOU GO AHEAD AND EAT MY RICE.
MNCH MNCH MNCH
CHOMP
YES, SIR! THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR.
STILL HAVEN'T FOUND YOUR SHOE?


THOK
HUH?
CAN'T BE HELPED.
UH, NO SIR.
YEAH.
SERGEANT HONDA'S ALL RIGHT SOMETIMES, HUH?
SIR, THIS IS TOO MUCH.
SHUT UP AND PUT IT ON!

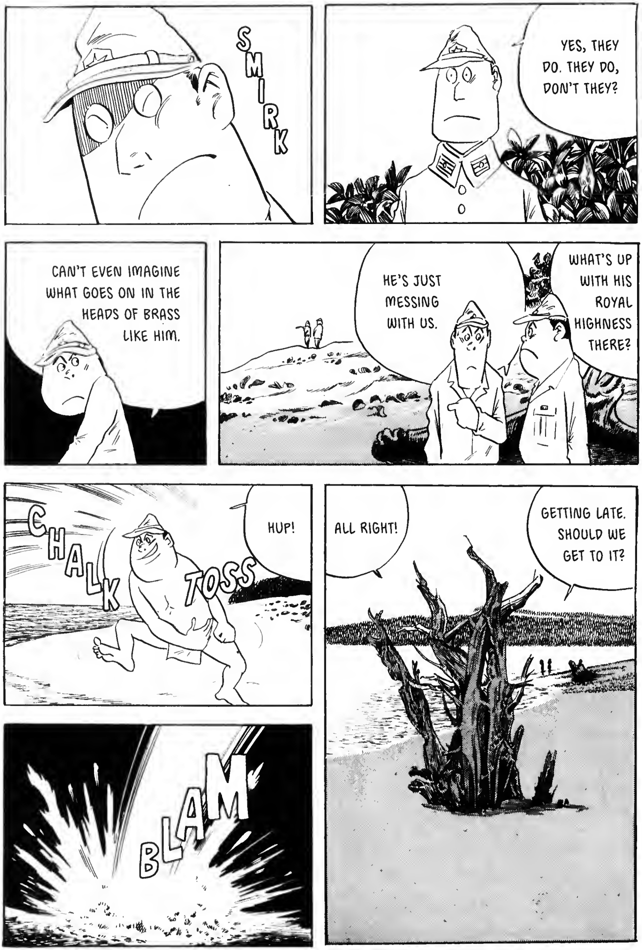

AAAWK
AWK
HE HAS A BOY IN GRADE FIVE AND A GIRL WHO'S ALMOST THREE.
I HEARD...
YES, SIR.
SERGEANT HONDA, YOUR SHOES...
THE ORDER'S COME DOWN FROM DIVISION HQ FOR THE MATSUYAMA CAMP MEN TO HEAD OUT THIS MONTH.
HA HA HA HA!
I DECIDED TO GO BAREFOOT FROM NOW ON.
UNDERSTOOD, SIR. MY MEN AND I WON'T LET YOU DOWN.

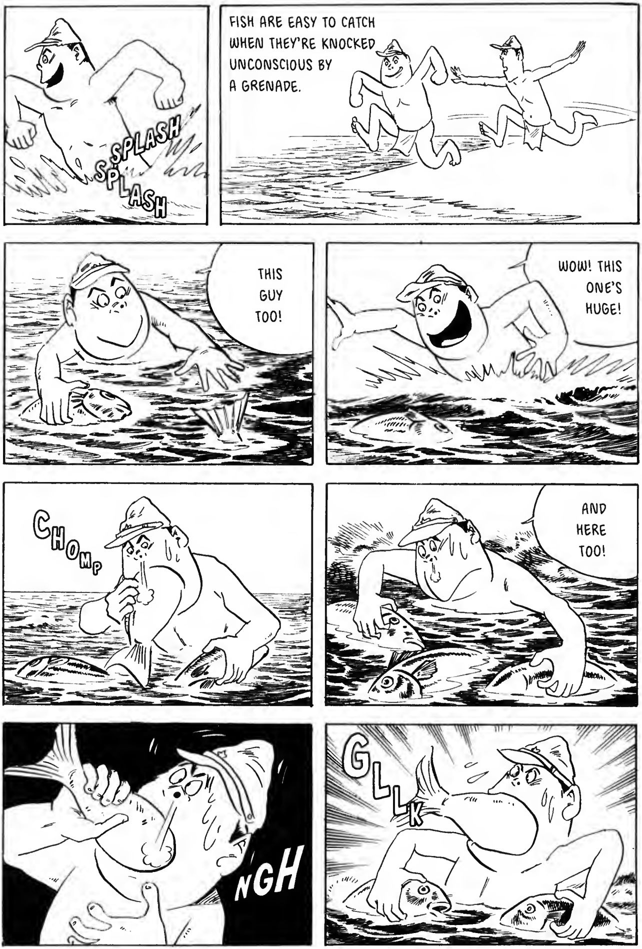

LISTEN UP!
SINCE THE PIG HUNT FOR NEW YEAR'S FAILED, WE ARE TO GO FISHING WITH OUR GRENADES.
NAKAMOTO, KAYAMA. YOU ARE FISHING.
THE REST OF YOU ARE BASE BUILDING. ANY QUESTIONS?
NO SIR
ROOKIES, FALL IN!
GULP
WHHHHAAAAP
YOU GET THE MESSAGE?
NEW RECRUITS ARE LIKE TATAMI MATS: THE MORE YOU BEAT THEM, THE BETTER THEY ARE.
THANK YOU, SIR!

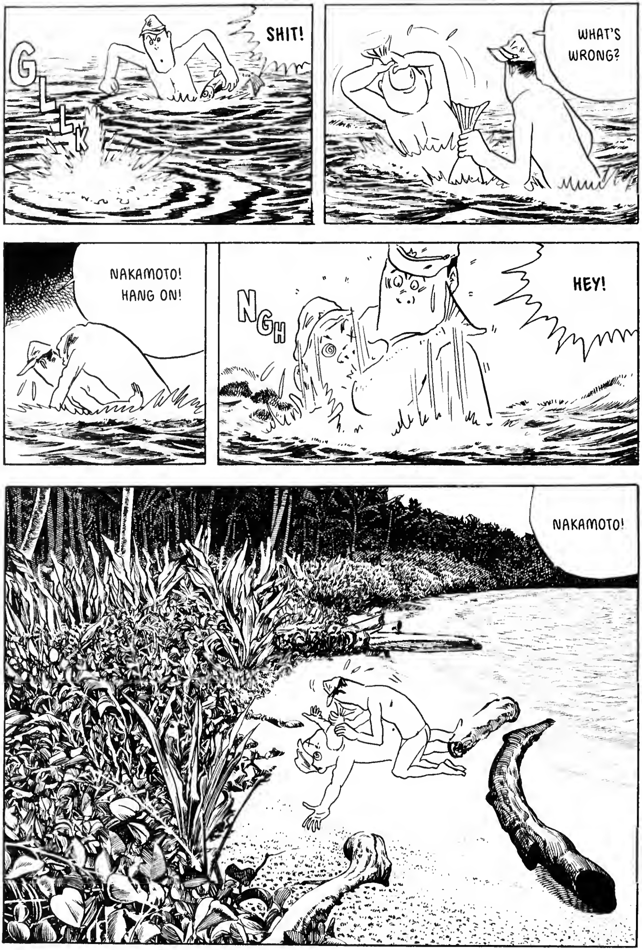

NAH, THIS IS HELL.
THIS PLACE'S LIKE PRISON, AKASAKI.
KREEE KREEE
WHO WAS THAT? WHO'S TALKING NOW?
NOT BAD, HEY KAYAMA? WE GET TO GO FISHING. LET'S TAKE IT SLOW.

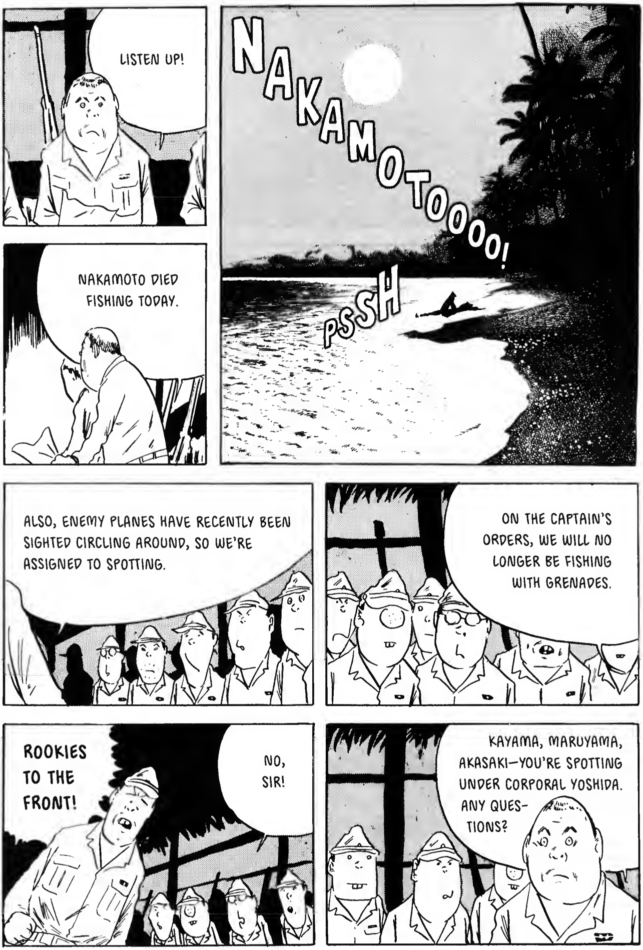

YOU WANT A SMOKE?
HOOEEE! HA HA!
IF WE CATCH SOMETHING, LET'S JUST SLICE IT UP INTO SASHIMI AND CHOW DOWN.
OF COURSE.
THAT BASTARD KANEDA'S GOT SOME NERVE, HUH?
HE HIT ME WITH THE RICE BUCKET ONCE.
ONE DAY, I'LL KNOCK HIM FLYING...
HEY! IT'S COLONEL TADOKORO!
SIR!
MM HMM.
YOU MEN, DON'T YOU THINK THE TERRAIN OF BAIEN QUITE RESEMBLES MINATOGAWA*?
YES, SIR. THEY DO LOOK VERY SIMILAR.

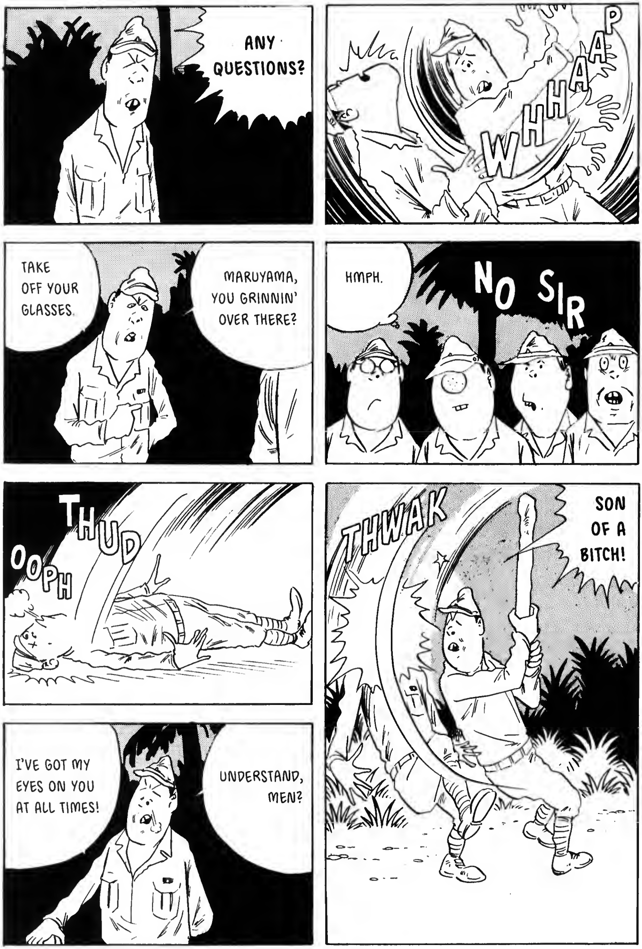
*WHERE THE DECISIVE BATTLE BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL FORCES AND THE REBEL ASHIKAGA CLAN WAS FOUGHT.

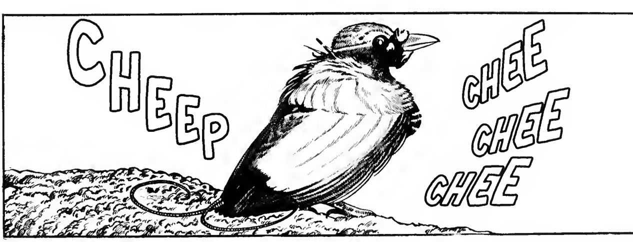

SMIRK
YES, THEY DO. THEY DO, DON'T THEY?
CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT GOES ON IN THE HEADS OF BRASS LIKE HIM.
WHAT'S UP WITH HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THERE?
HE'S JUST MESSING WITH US.
HUP!
CHALK
TOSS
BLAM
GETTING LATE. SHOULD WE GET TO IT?
ALL RIGHT!

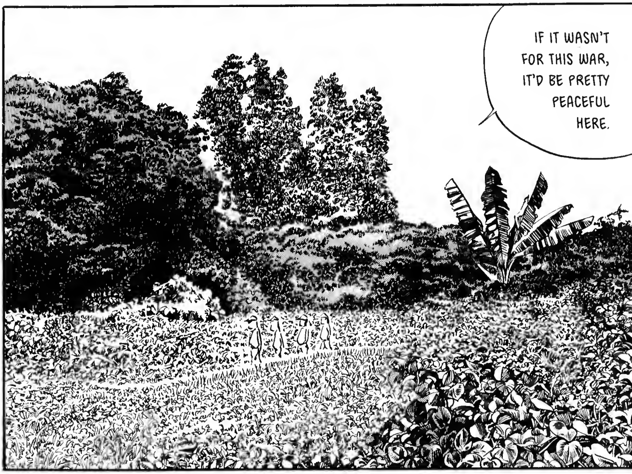

SPLASH
SPLASH
FISH ARE EASY TO CATCH WHEN THEY'RE KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS BY A GRENADE.
THIS GUY TOO!
WOW! THIS ONE'S HUGE!
CHOMP
AND HERE TOO!
NGH
GLLK

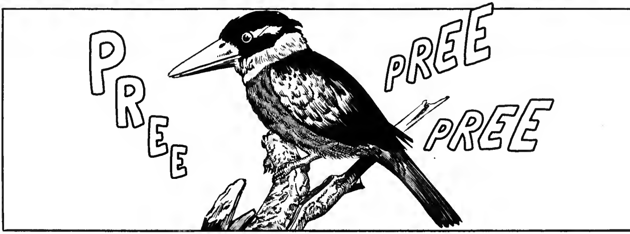

GLLLK
SHIT!
WHAT'S WRONG?
NAKAMOTO! HANG ON!
NGH
HEY!
NAKAMOTO!

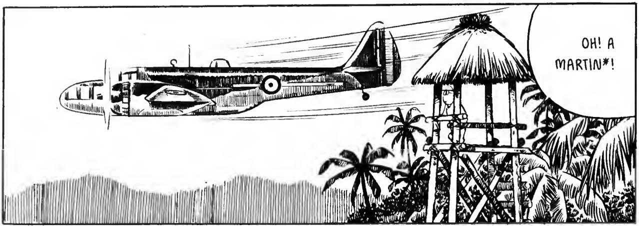

LISTEN UP!
NAKAMOTO DIED FISHING TODAY.
NAKAMOTOOOO!
PSSH
ON THE CAPTAIN'S ORDERS, WE WILL NO LONGER BE FISHING WITH GRENADES.
ALSO, ENEMY PLANES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SIGHTED CIRCLING AROUND, SO WE'RE ASSIGNED TO SPOTTING.
KAYAMA, MARUYAMA, AKASAKI—YOU'RE SPOTTING UNDER CORPORAL YOSHIDA. ANY QUESTIONS?
NO, SIR!
ROOKIES TO THE FRONT!


ANY QUESTIONS?
WHHHAAP
TAKE OFF YOUR GLASSES.
MARUYAMA, YOU GRINNIN' OVER THERE?
HMPH.
NO SIR
THUD
OOPH
THWAK
SON OF A BITCH!
I'VE GOT MY EYES ON YOU AT ALL TIMES!
UNDERSTAND, MEN?

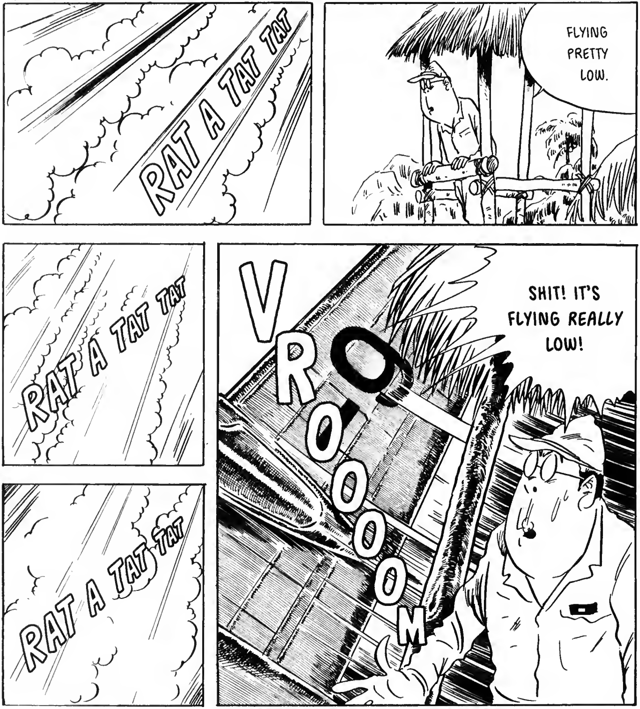

CHEEP
CHEE CHEE CHEE

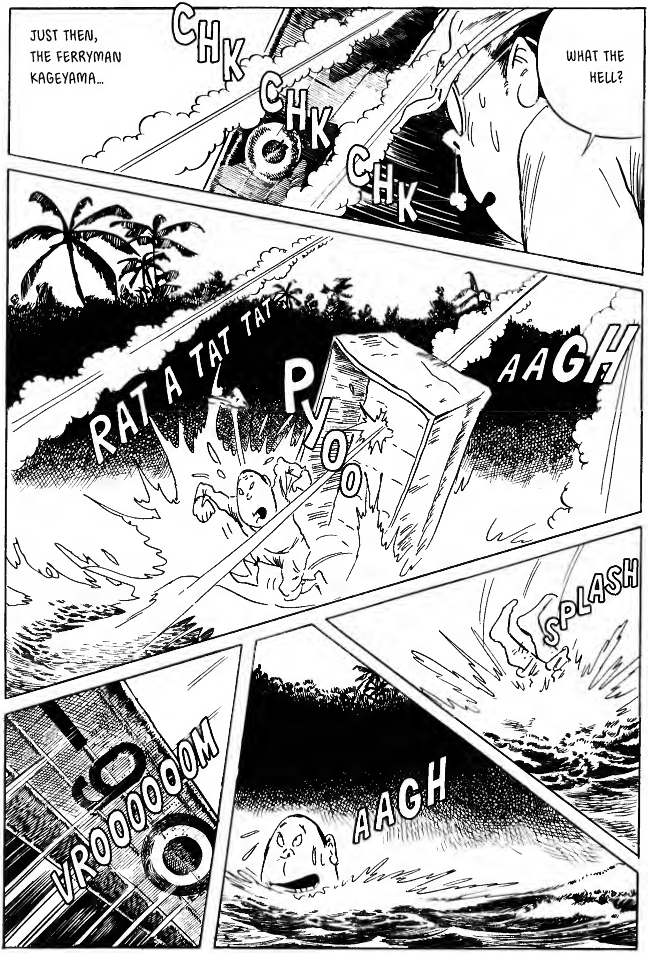

IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS WAR, IT'D BE PRETTY PEACEFUL HERE.

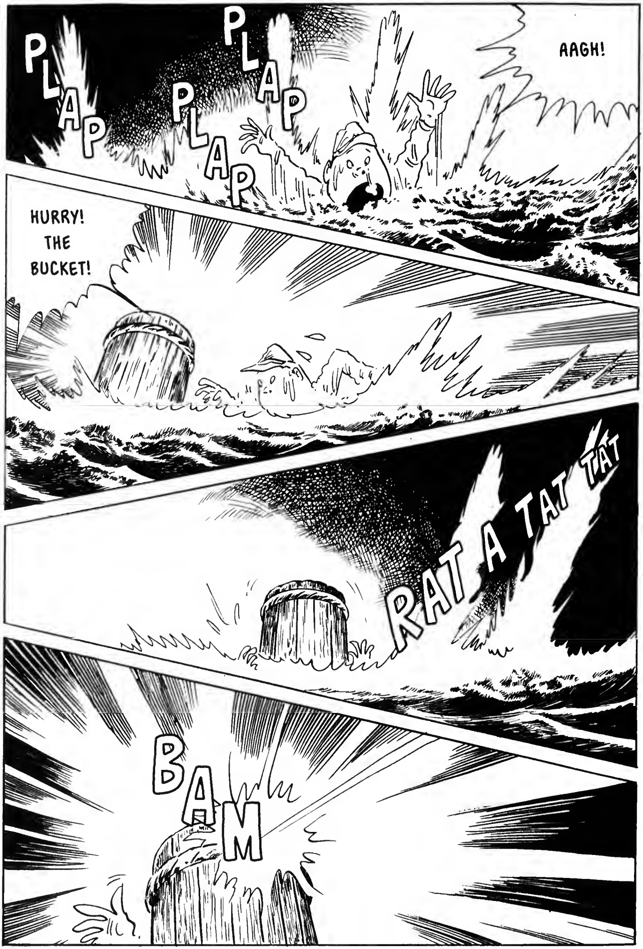

PREE
PREE PREE

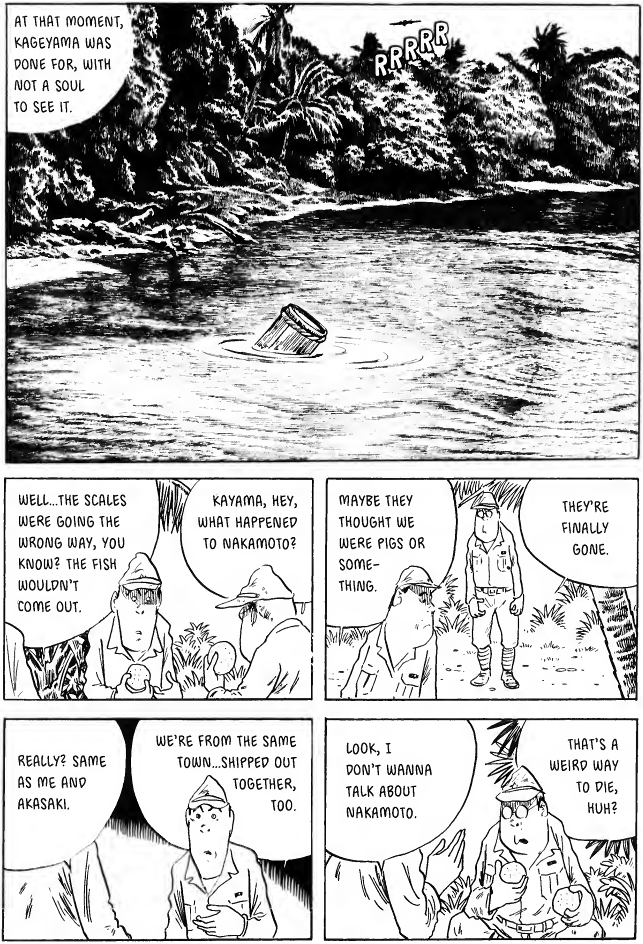


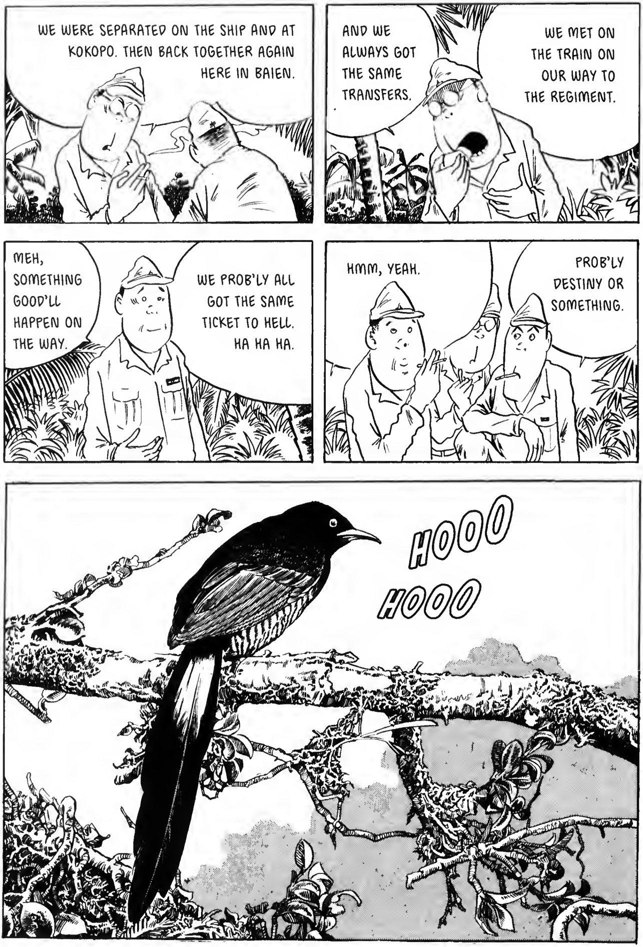
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.


RAT A TAT TAT
FLYING PRETTY LOW.
RAT A TAT TAT
RAT A TAT TAT
VROOOOOOM
SHIT! IT'S FLYING *REALLY* LOW!

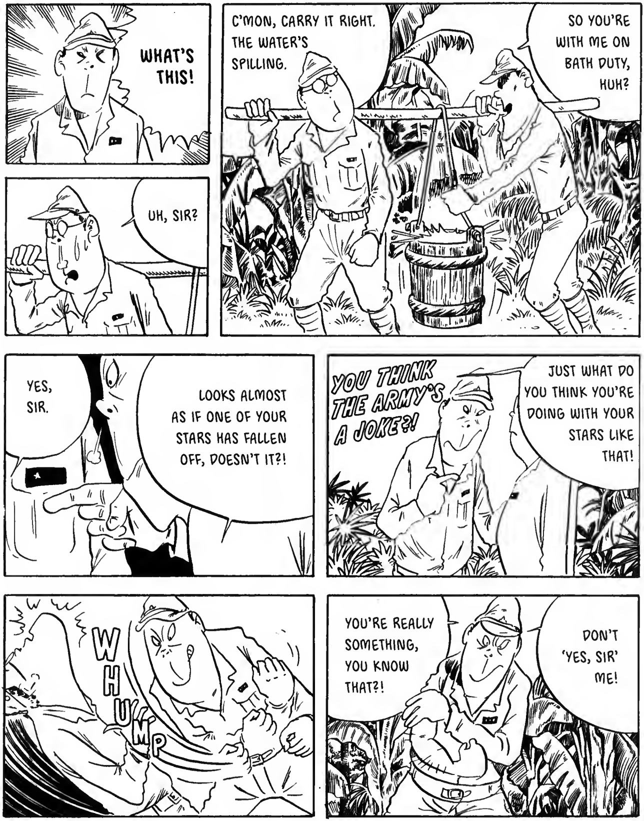

JUST THEN, THE FERRYMAN KAGEYAMA...
CHK
CHK
CHK
WHAT THE HELL?
RAT A TAT TAT
PYOO
AAGH
SPLASH
VROOOOOOM
AAGH

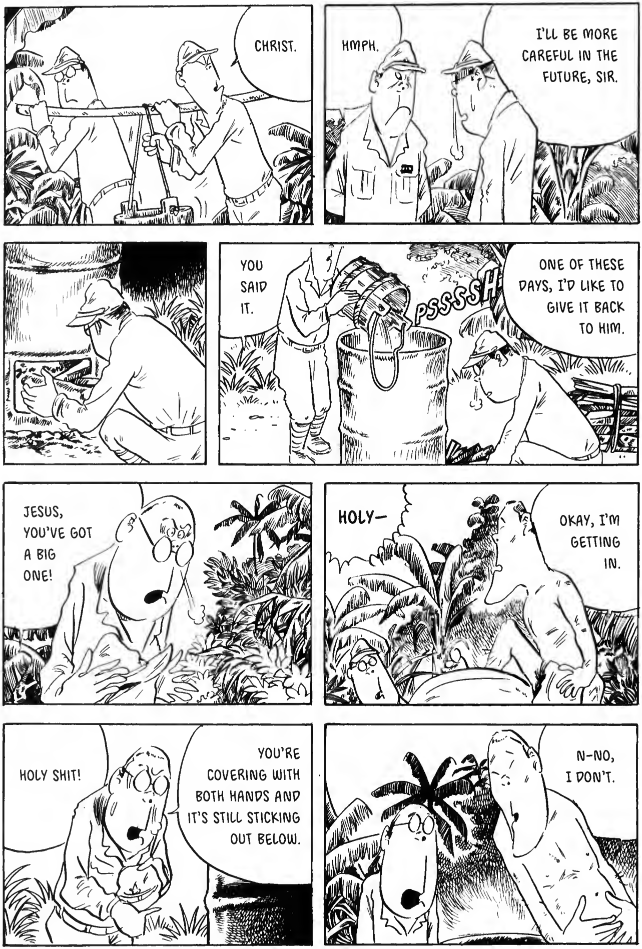

PLAP
PLAP
PLAP
AAGH!
HURRY! THE BUCKET!
RAT A TAT TAT
BAM

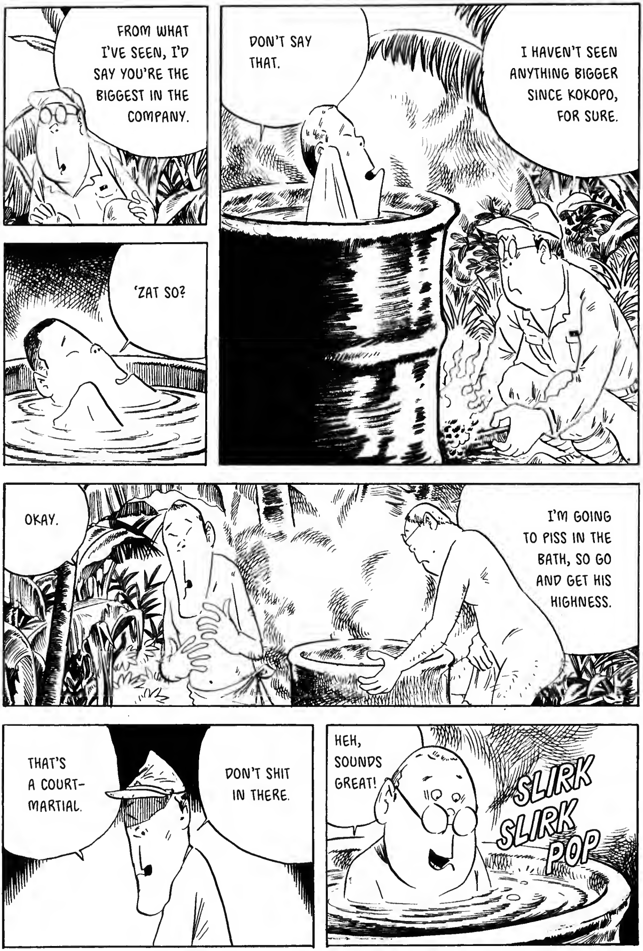

AT THAT MOMENT, KAGEYAMA WAS DONE FOR, WITH NOT A SOUL TO SEE IT.
RRRRR
THEY'RE FINALLY GONE.
MAYBE THEY THOUGHT WE WERE PIGS OR SOMETHING.
KAYAMA, HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO NAKAMOTO?
WELL...THE SCALES WERE GOING THE WRONG WAY, YOU KNOW? THE FISH WOULDN'T COME OUT.
THAT'S A WEIRD WAY TO DIE, HUH?
LOOK, I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT NAKAMOTO.
WE'RE FROM THE SAME TOWN...SHIPPED OUT TOGETHER, TOO.
REALLY? SAME AS ME AND AKASAKI.

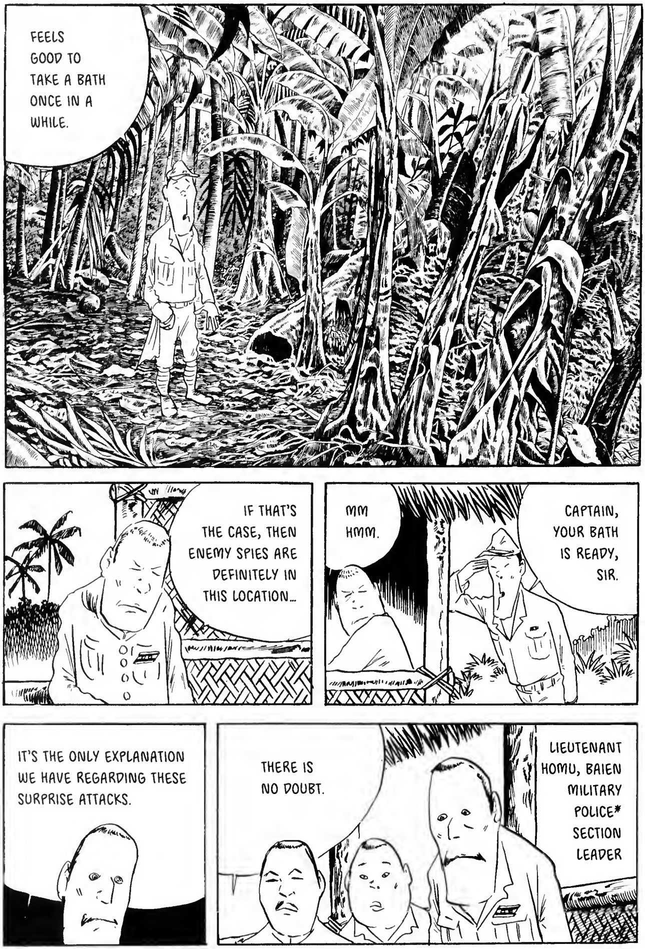

WE WERE SEPARATED ON THE SHIP AND AT KOKOPO. THEN BACK TOGETHER AGAIN HERE IN BAIEN.
AND WE ALWAYS GOT THE SAME TRANSFERS.
WE MET ON THE TRAIN ON OUR WAY TO THE REGIMENT.
MEH, SOMETHING GOOD'LL HAPPEN ON THE WAY.
WE PROB'LY ALL GOT THE SAME TICKET TO HELL. HA HA HA.
HMM, YEAH.
PROB'LY DESTINY OR SOMETHING.
HOOO
HOOO

LITTLE FINGER

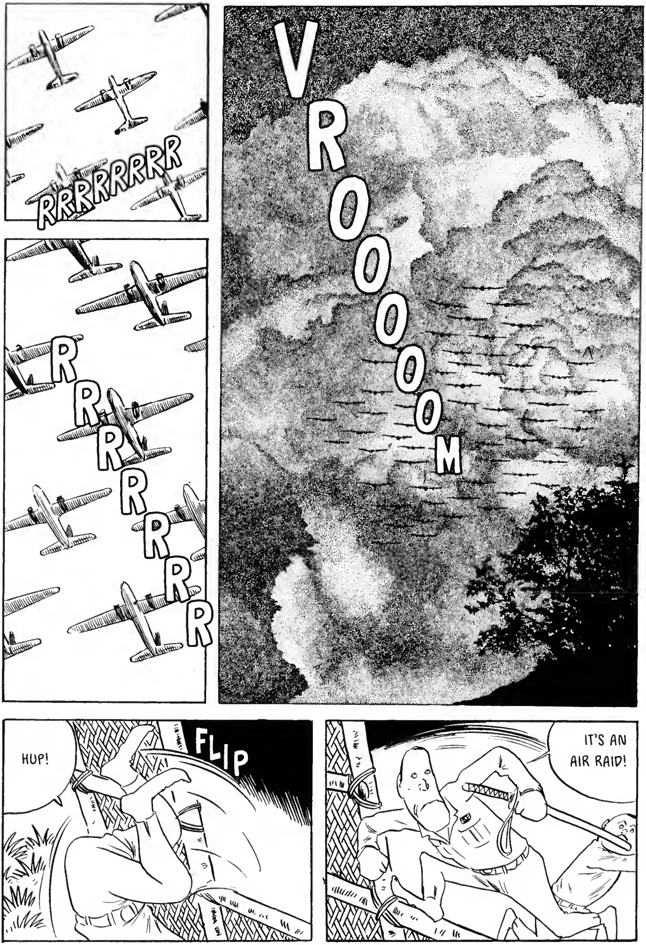

SO YOU'RE WITH ME ON BATH DUTY, HUH?
C'MON, CARRY IT RIGHT. THE WATER'S SPILLING.
WHAT'S THIS!
UH, SIR?
LOOKS ALMOST AS IF ONE OF YOUR STARS HAS FALLEN OFF, DOESN'T IT?!
YES, SIR.
JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING WITH YOUR STARS LIKE THAT!
YOU THINK THE ARMY'S A JOKE?!
WHUMP
DON'T 'YES, SIR' ME!
YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING, YOU KNOW THAT?!

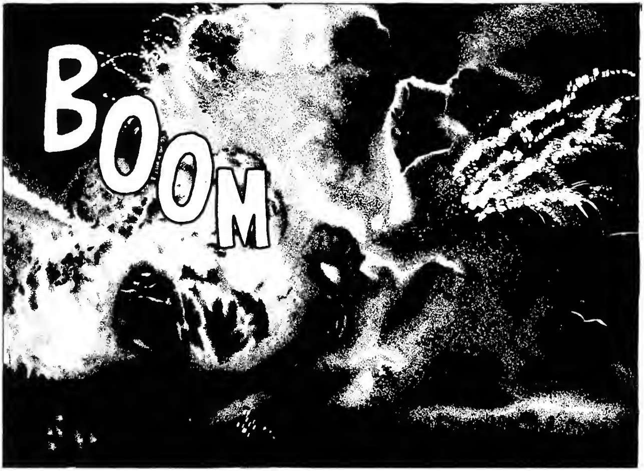

CHRIST.
HMPH.
I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE, SIR.
YOU SAID IT.
PSSSSH
ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'D LIKE TO GIVE IT BACK TO HIM.
JESUS, YOU'VE GOT A BIG ONE!
HOLY—
OKAY, I'M GETTING IN.
HOLY SHIT!
YOU'RE COVERING WITH BOTH HANDS AND IT'S STILL STICKING OUT BELOW.
N-NO, I DON'T.

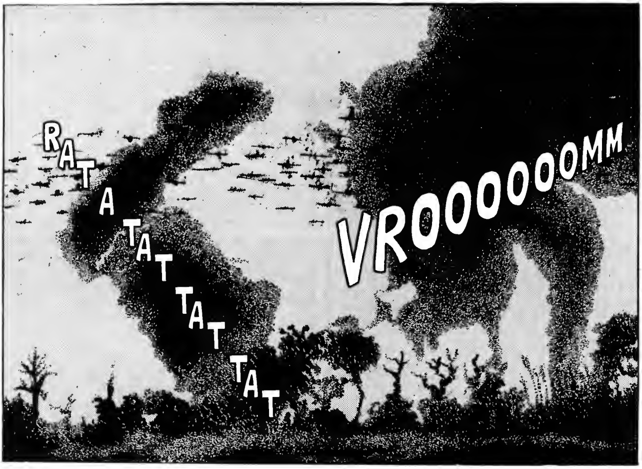

FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, I'D SAY YOU'RE THE BIGGEST IN THE COMPANY.
DON'T SAY THAT.
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING BIGGER SINCE KOKOPO, FOR SURE.
'ZAT SO?
OKAY.
I'M GOING TO PISS IN THE BATH, SO GO AND GET HIS HIGHNESS.
THAT'S A COURT-MARTIAL.
DON'T SHIT IN THERE.
HEH, SOUNDS GREAT!
SLIRK
SLIRK
POP

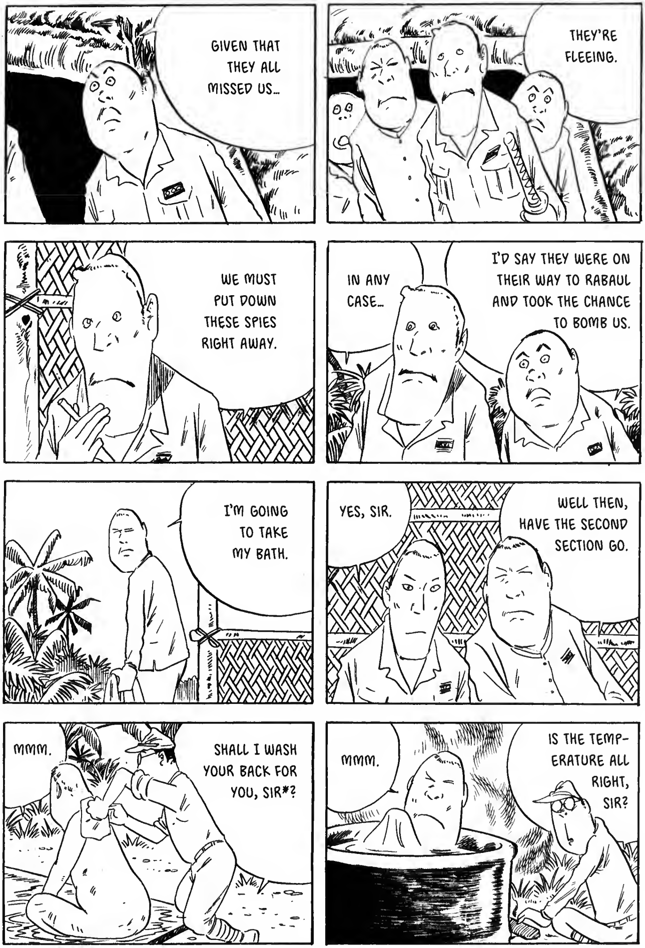

FEELS GOOD TO TAKE A BATH ONCE IN A WHILE.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN ENEMY SPIES ARE DEFINITELY IN THIS LOCATION...
CAPTAIN, YOUR BATH IS READY, SIR.
MM HMM.
IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION WE HAVE REGARDING THESE SURPRISE ATTACKS.
THERE IS NO DOUBT.
LIEUTENANT HOMU, BAIEN MILITARY POLICE* SECTION LEADER

*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.


RRRRRRRR
RRRRRRR
VROOOOOOM
HUP!
FLIP
IT'S AN AIR RAID!

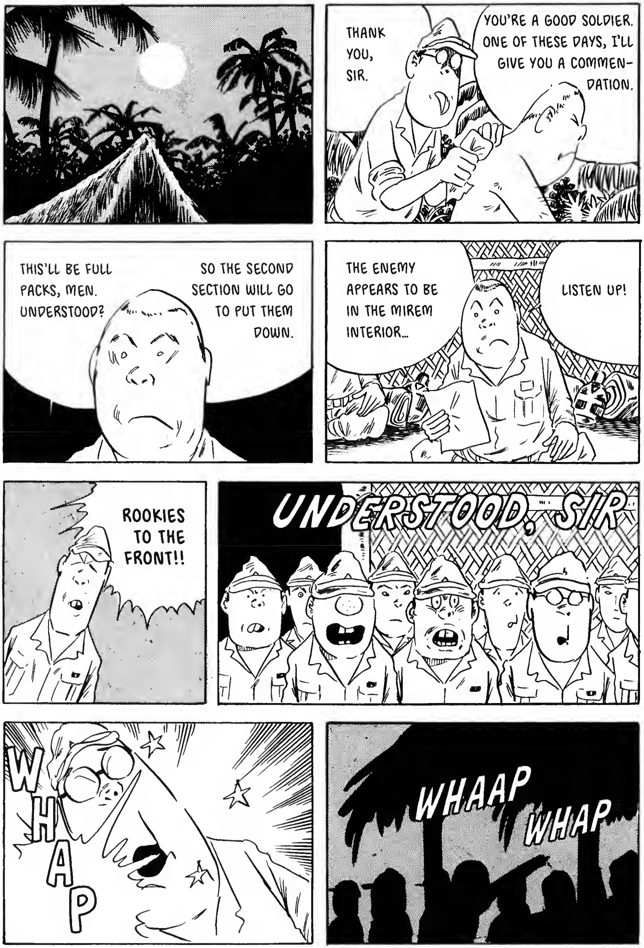

BOOM

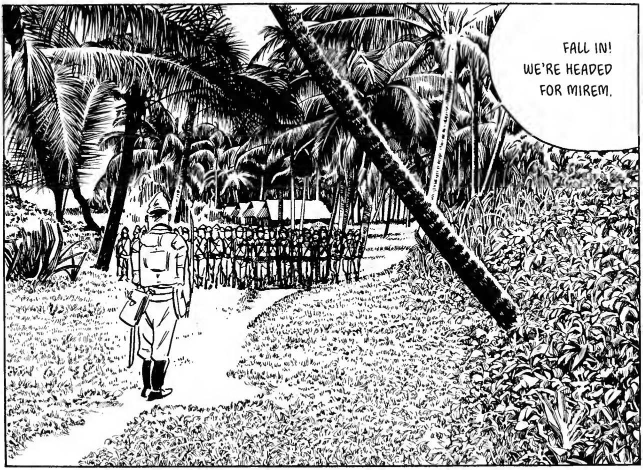

RATATATATTATTATTAT
VROOOOOOOMM

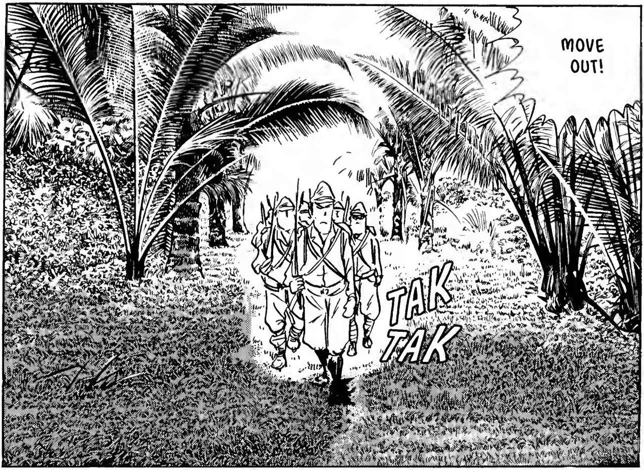

GIVEN THAT THEY ALL MISSED US...
THEY'RE FLEEING.
WE MUST PUT DOWN THESE SPIES RIGHT AWAY.
I'D SAY THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO RABAUL AND TOOK THE CHANCE TO BOMB US.
IN ANY CASE...
I'M GOING TO TAKE MY BATH.
WELL THEN, HAVE THE SECOND SECTION GO.
YES, SIR.
SHALL I WASH YOUR BACK FOR YOU, SIR*?
MMM.
IS THE TEMPERATURE ALL RIGHT, SIR?
MMM.

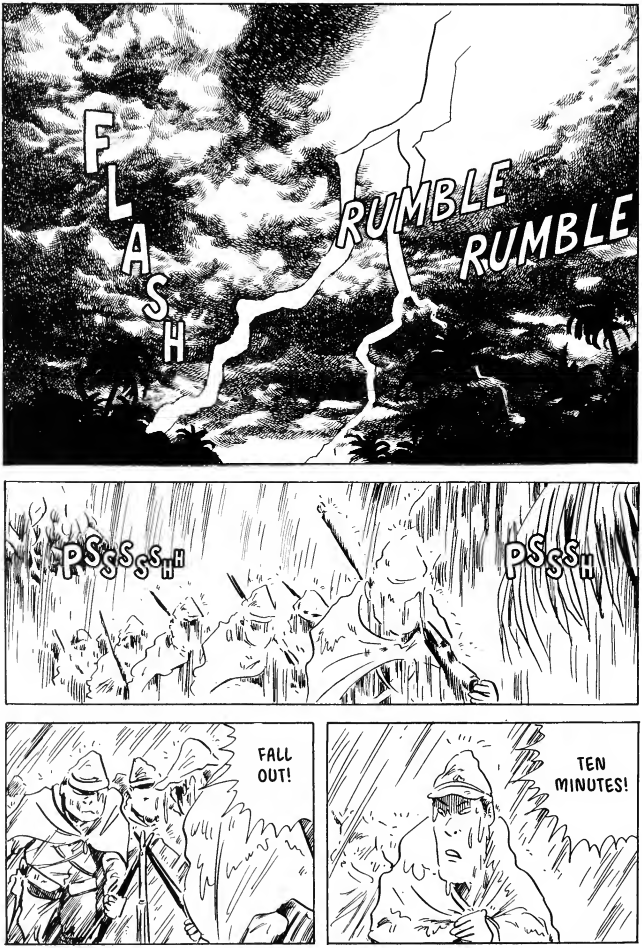
---

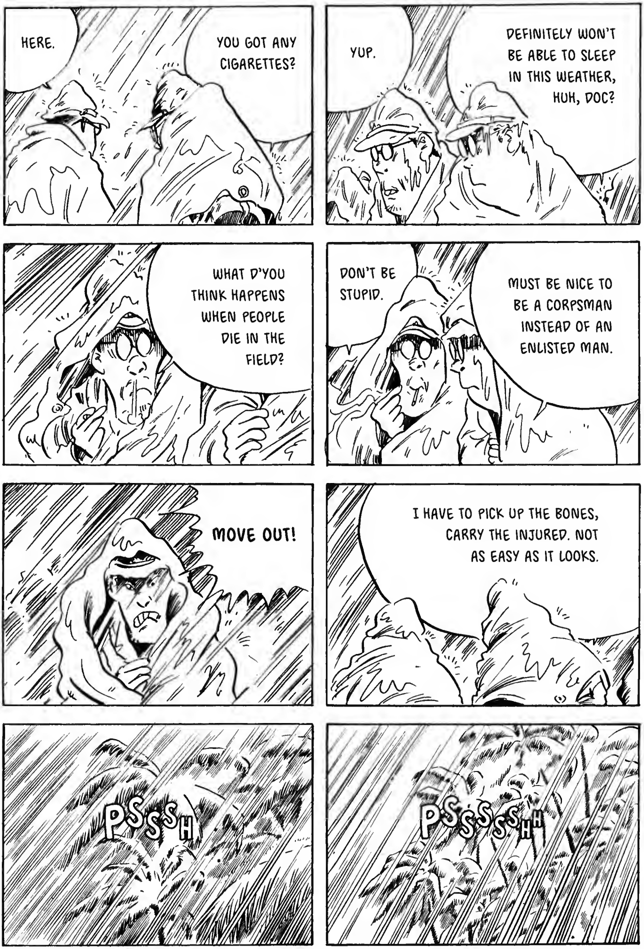
*JAPAN HAS A COMMUNAL BATHING CULTURE; OFFERS TO WASH BACKS ARE NATURAL AND COMMON.

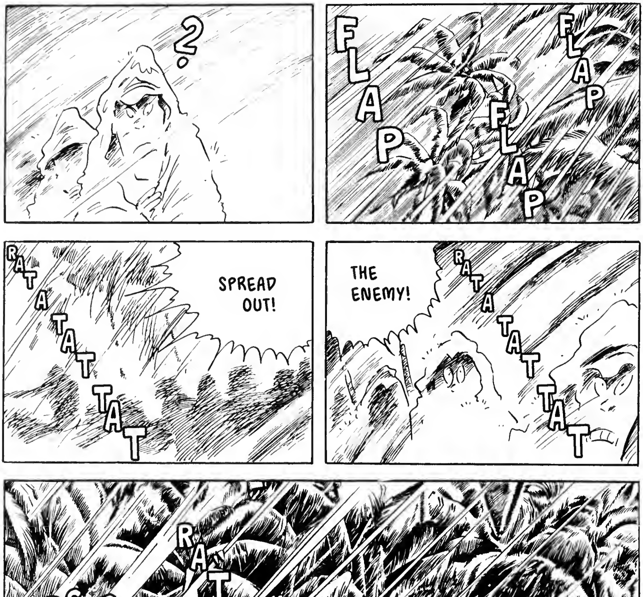

YOU'RE A GOOD SOLDIER. ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'LL GIVE YOU A COMMENDATION.
THANK YOU, SIR.
LISTEN UP!
THE ENEMY APPEARS TO BE IN THE MIREM INTERIOR...
SO THE SECOND SECTION WILL GO TO PUT THEM DOWN.
THIS'LL BE FULL PACKS, MEN. UNDERSTOOD?
UNDERSTOOD, SIR
ROOKIES TO THE FRONT!!
WHAAP
WHAP
WHAP

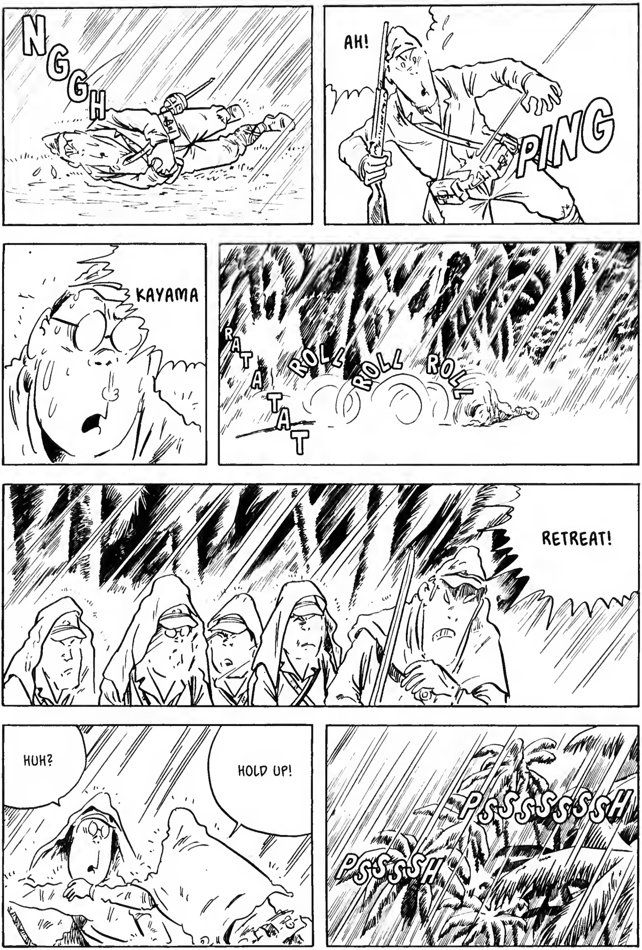

FALL IN!
WE'RE HEADED FOR MIREM.

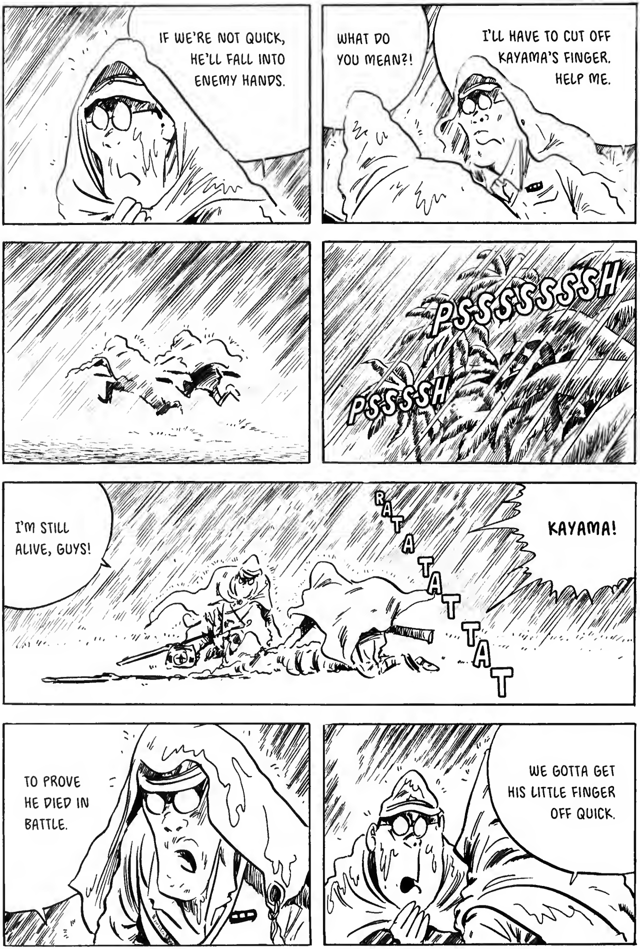

MOVE OUT!
TAK TAK

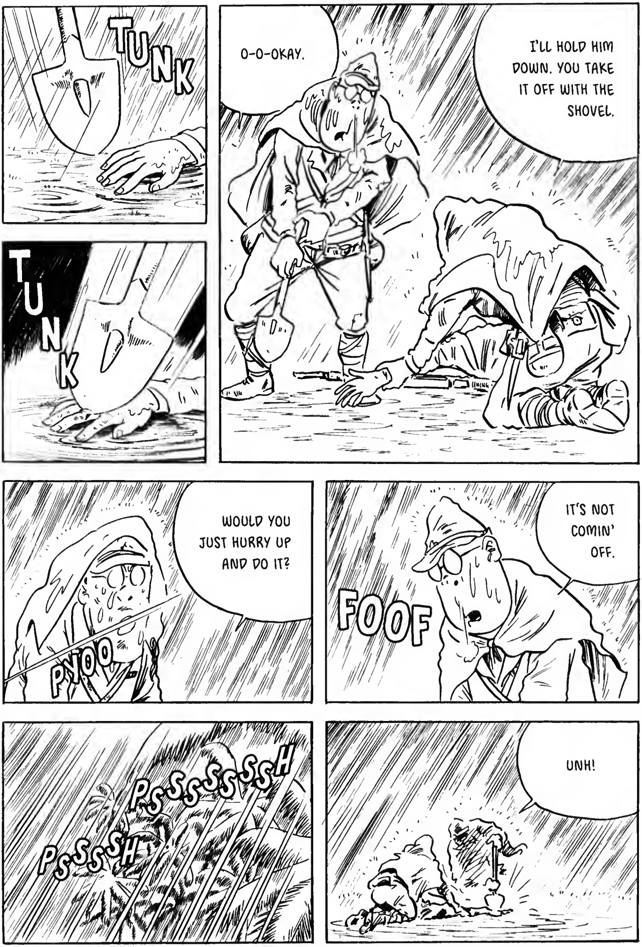

FLASH
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
PSSSSSH
PSSSH
FALL OUT!
TEN MINUTES!

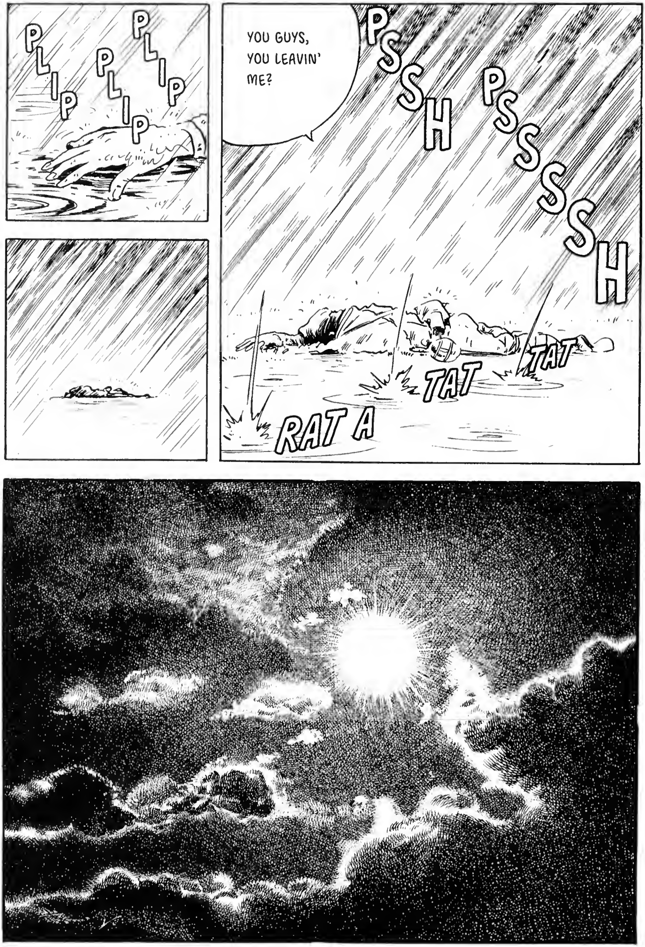

DEFINITELY WON'T BE ABLE TO SLEEP IN THIS WEATHER, HUH, DOC?
YUP.
YOU GOT ANY CIGARETTES?
HERE.
MUST BE NICE TO BE A CORPSMAN INSTEAD OF AN ENLISTED MAN.
DON'T BE STUPID.
WHAT D'YOU THINK HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DIE IN THE FIELD?
I HAVE TO PICK UP THE BONES, CARRY THE INJURED. NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS.
MOVE OUT!
PSSSSSHH
PSSSH

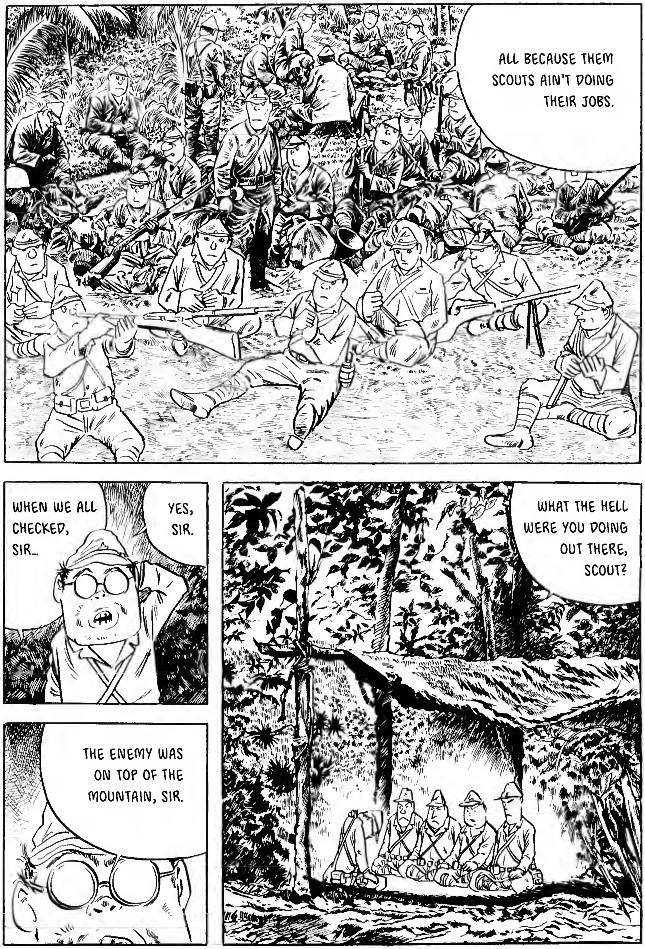

?
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
RATATATTAT
SPREAD OUT!
THE ENEMY!
RATATATTAT
PSSSH
RATATATTAT
PSSSSH

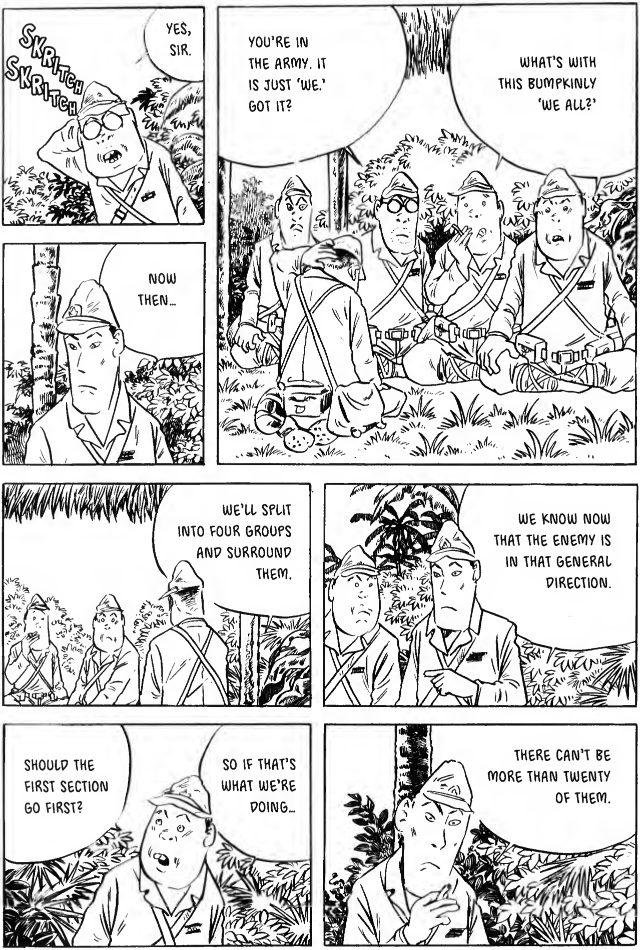

NGGH
AH!
PING
KAYAMA
RATATAT
ROLL ROLL ROLL
RETREAT!
HUH?
HOLD UP!
PSSSSSSSH
PSSSSH

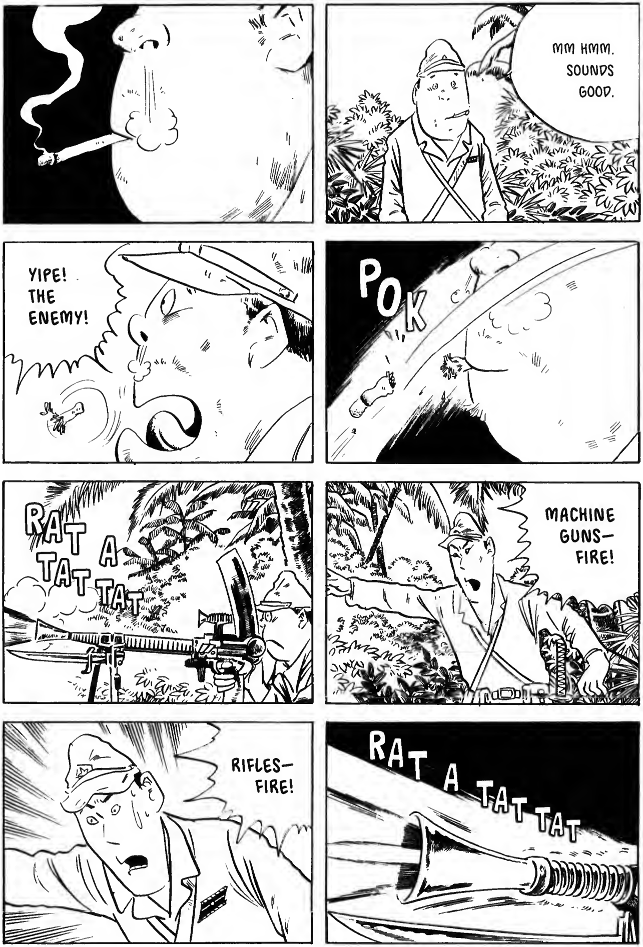

IF WE'RE NOT QUICK, HE'LL FALL INTO ENEMY HANDS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
I'LL HAVE TO CUT OFF KAYAMA'S FINGER. HELP ME.
PSSSSSSSH
PSSSSH
I'M STILL ALIVE, GUYS!
RATATATTATTAT
KAYAMA!
TO PROVE HE DIED IN BATTLE.
WE GOTTA GET HIS LITTLE FINGER OFF QUICK.

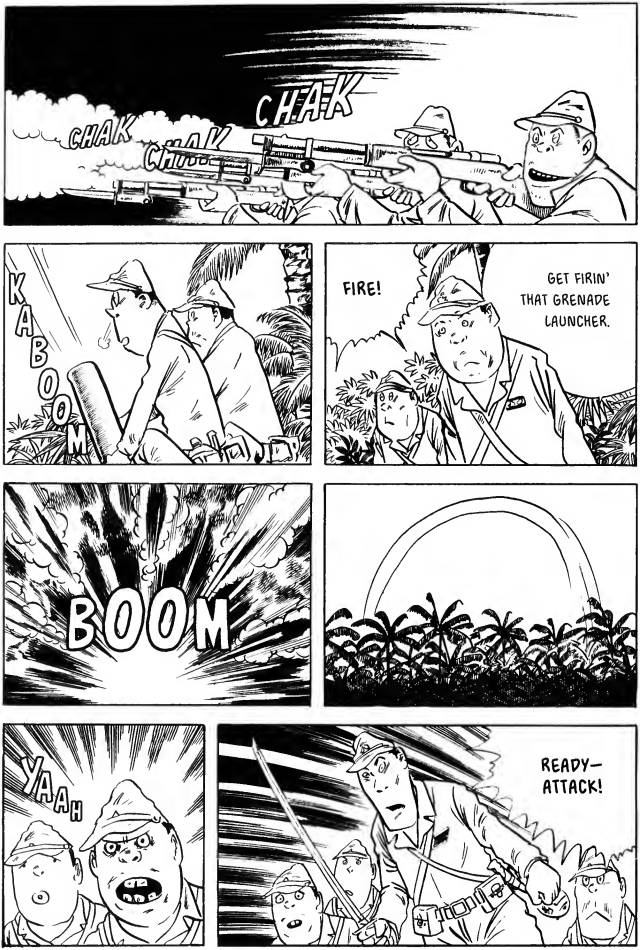

I'LL HOLD HIM DOWN. YOU TAKE IT OFF WITH THE SHOVEL.
O-O-OKAY.
TUNK
TUNK
IT'S NOT COMIN' OFF.
FOOF
WOULD YOU JUST HURRY UP AND DO IT?
PYOO
UNH!
PSSSSSSH
PSSSSH

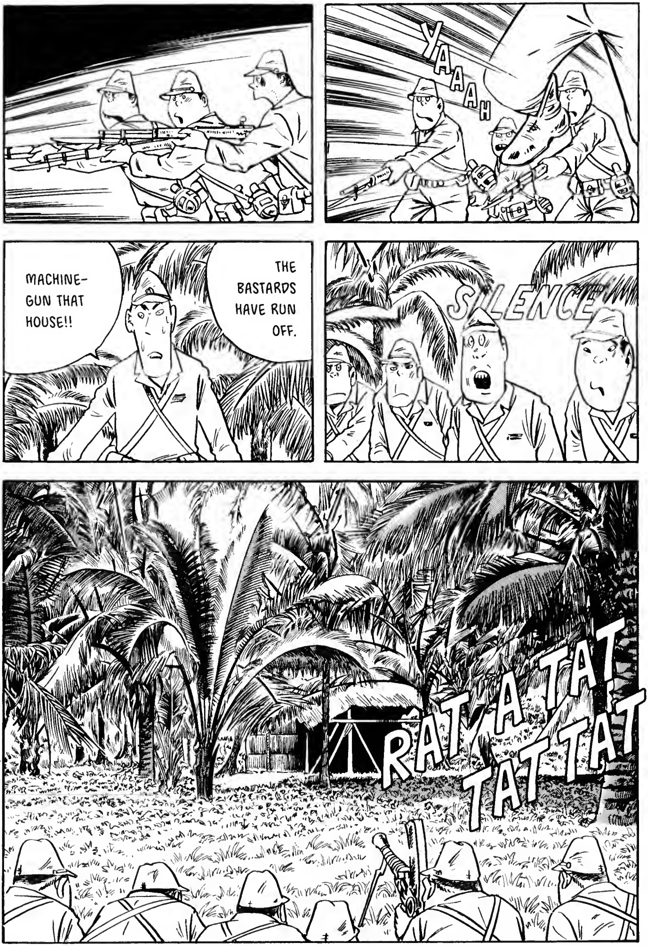

PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
YOU GUYS, YOU LEAVIN' ME?
PSSH
PSSSSSH
RAT A
TAT
TAT

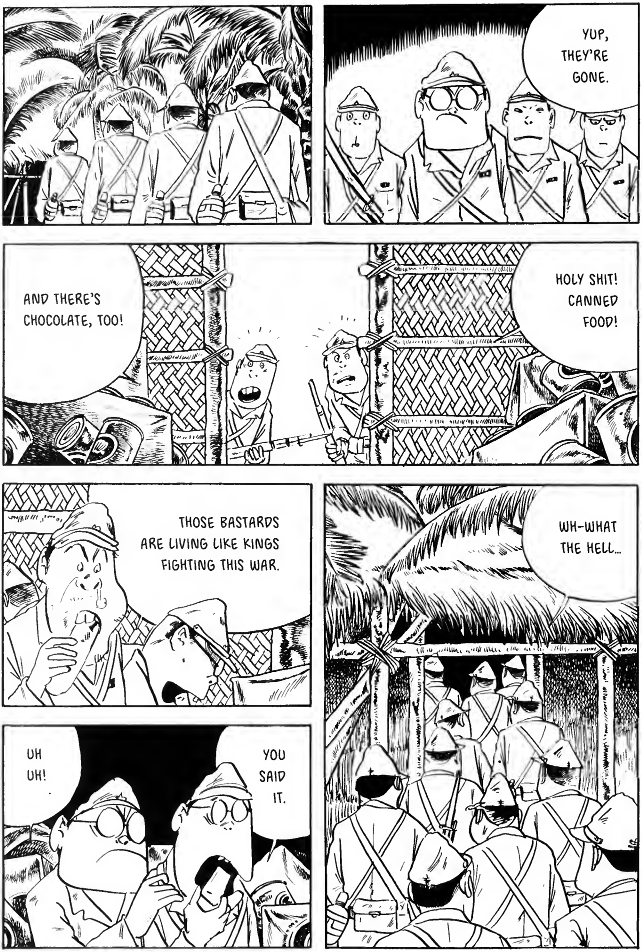

ALL BECAUSE THEM SCOUTS AIN'T DOING THEIR JOBS.
WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU DOING OUT THERE, SCOUT?
YES, SIR.
WHEN WE ALL CHECKED, SIR...
THE ENEMY WAS ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, SIR.

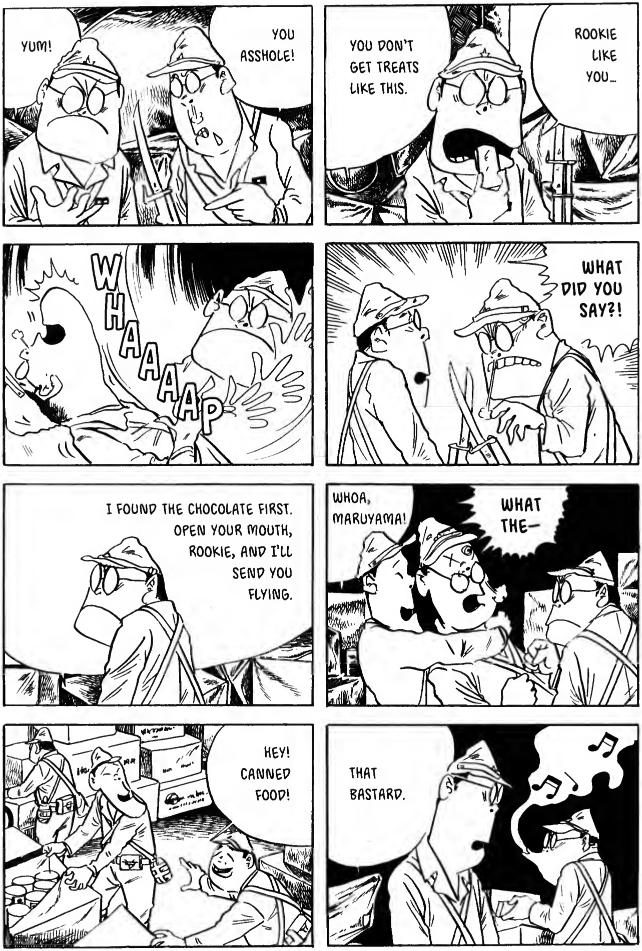

WHAT'S WITH THIS BUMPKINLY 'WE ALL?'
YOU'RE IN THE ARMY. IT IS JUST 'WE.' GOT IT?
SKRITCH SKRITCH
YES, SIR.
NOW THEN...
WE KNOW NOW THAT THE ENEMY IS IN THAT GENERAL DIRECTION.
THERE CAN'T BE MORE THAN TWENTY OF THEM.
WE'LL SPLIT INTO FOUR GROUPS AND SURROUND THEM.
SO IF THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING...
SHOULD THE FIRST SECTION GO FIRST?

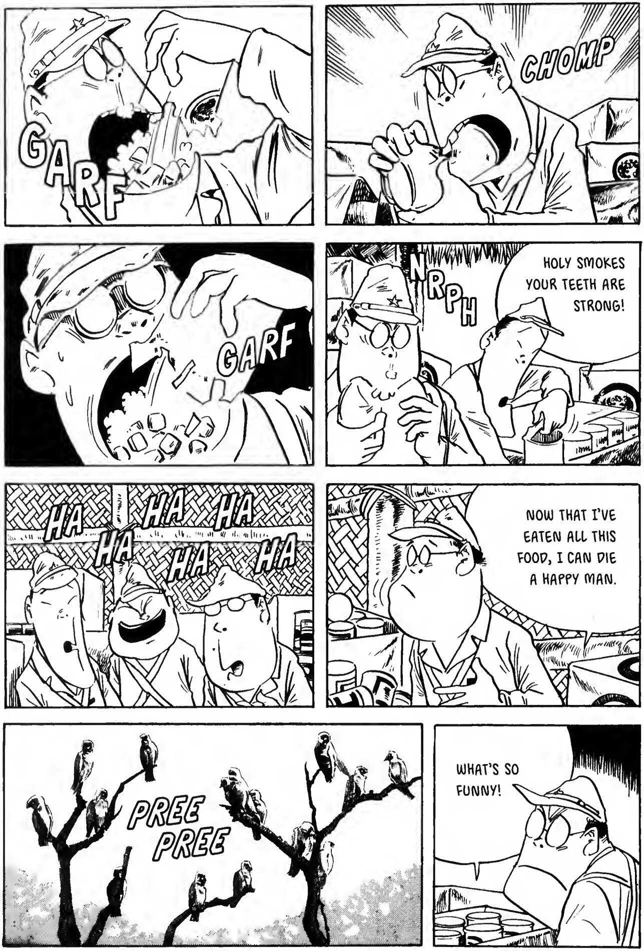

MM HMM. SOUNDS GOOD.
YIPE! THE ENEMY!
POK
RAT A TAT TAT
MACHINE GUNS—FIRE!
RIFLES—FIRE!
RAT A TAT TAT

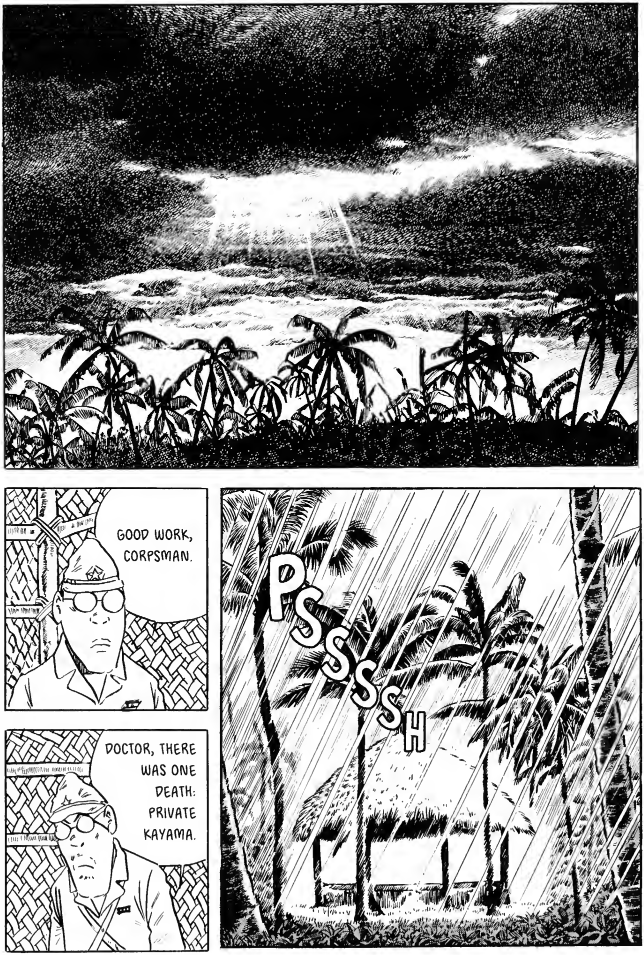

CHAK
CHAK
CHAK
KABOOM
FIRE!
GET FIRIN' THAT GRENADE LAUNCHER.
BOOM
YAAAH
READY—ATTACK!

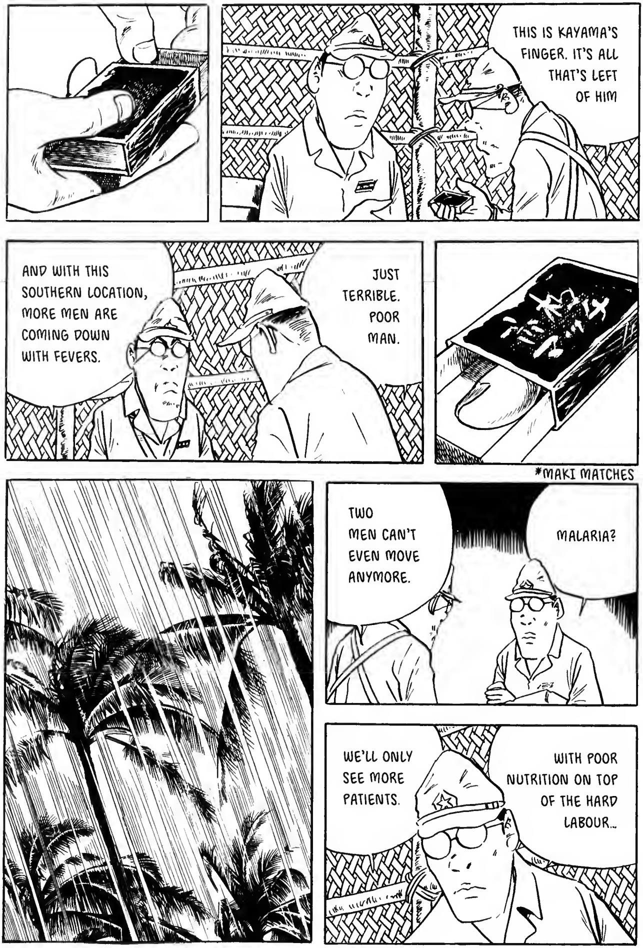

YAAAAH
MACHINE-GUN THAT HOUSE!!
THE BASTARDS HAVE RUN OFF.
SILENCE
RAT-A-TAT TAT TAT


YUP, THEY'RE GONE.
AND THERE'S CHOCOLATE, TOO!
HOLY SHIT! CANNED FOOD!
THOSE BASTARDS ARE LIVING LIKE KINGS FIGHTING THIS WAR.
WH-WHAT THE HELL...
UH UH!
YOU SAID IT.

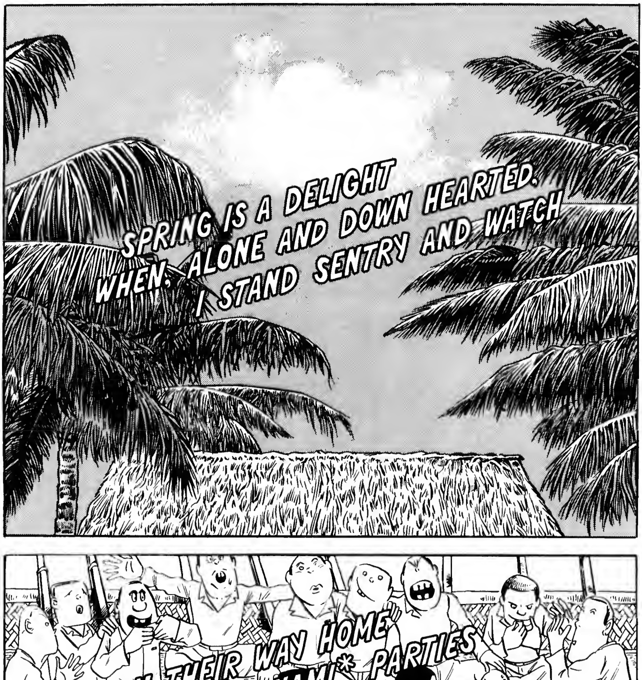

YUM!
YOU ASSHOLE!
YOU DON'T GET TREATS LIKE THIS.
ROOKIE LIKE YOU...
WHAAAAAP
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
I FOUND THE CHOCOLATE FIRST. OPEN YOUR MOUTH, ROOKIE, AND I'LL SEND YOU FLYING.
WHOA, MARUYAMA!
WHAT THE—
HEY! CANNED FOOD!
THAT BASTARD.


GARF
CHOMP
GARF
NRPH
HOLY SMOKES YOUR TEETH ARE STRONG!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
NOW THAT I'VE EATEN ALL THIS FOOD, I CAN DIE A HAPPY MAN.
PREE PREE
WHAT'S SO FUNNY!

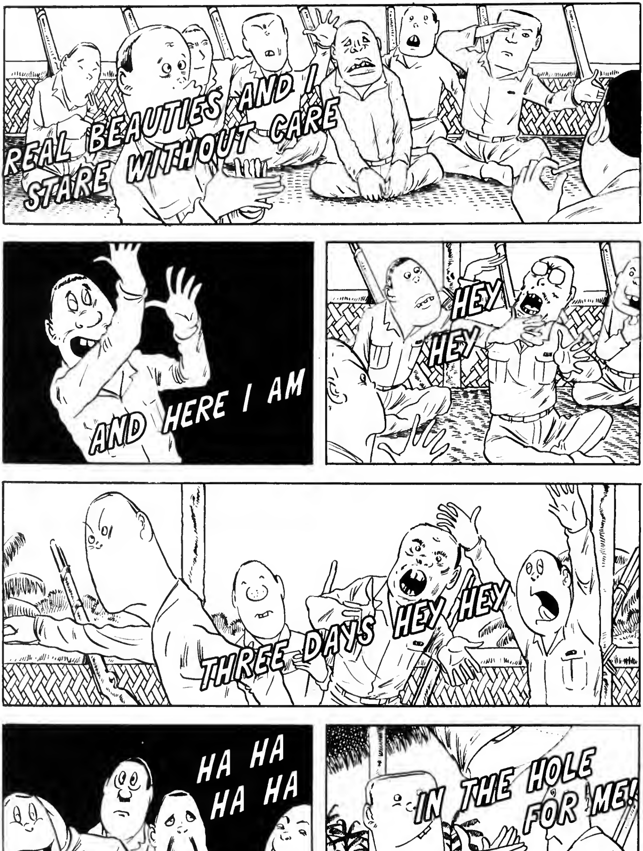

GOOD WORK, CORPSMAN.
DOCTOR, THERE WAS ONE DEATH: PRIVATE KAYAMA.
PSSSSH

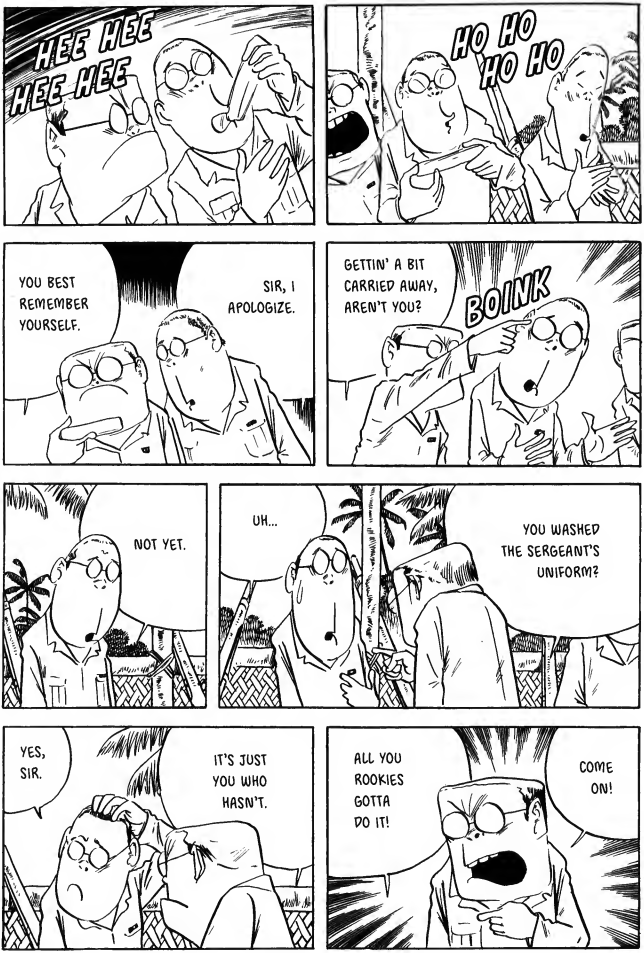

THIS IS KAYAMA'S FINGER. IT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HIM
AND WITH THIS SOUTHERN LOCATION, MORE MEN ARE COMING DOWN WITH FEVERS.
JUST TERRIBLE. POOR MAN.
*MAKI MATCHES
TWO MEN CAN'T EVEN MOVE ANYMORE.
MALARIA?
WE'LL ONLY SEE MORE PATIENTS.
WITH POOR NUTRITION ON TOP OF THE HARD LABOUR...

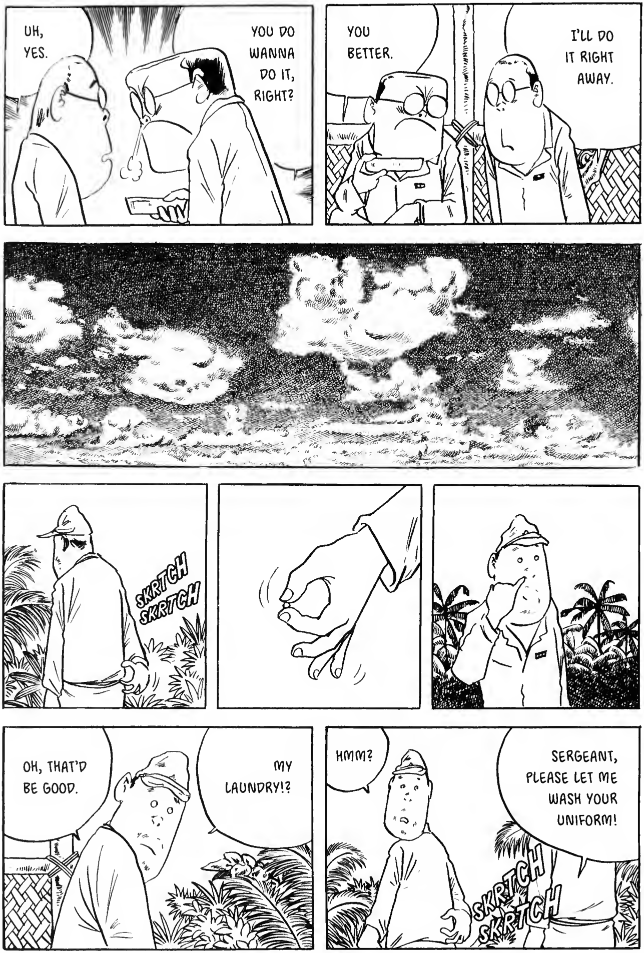
NEW YEAR'S

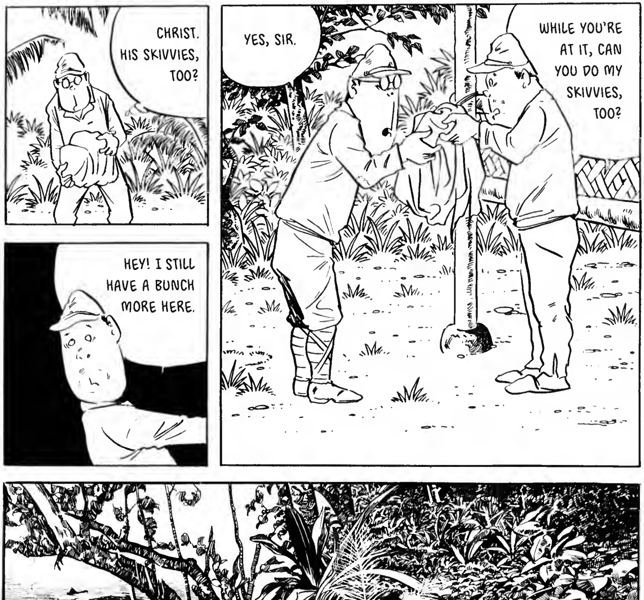

SPRING IS A DELIGHT
WHEN, ALONE AND DOWN HEARTED,
I STAND SENTRY AND WATCH
GIRLS ON THEIR WAY HOME
FROM HANAMI* PARTIES

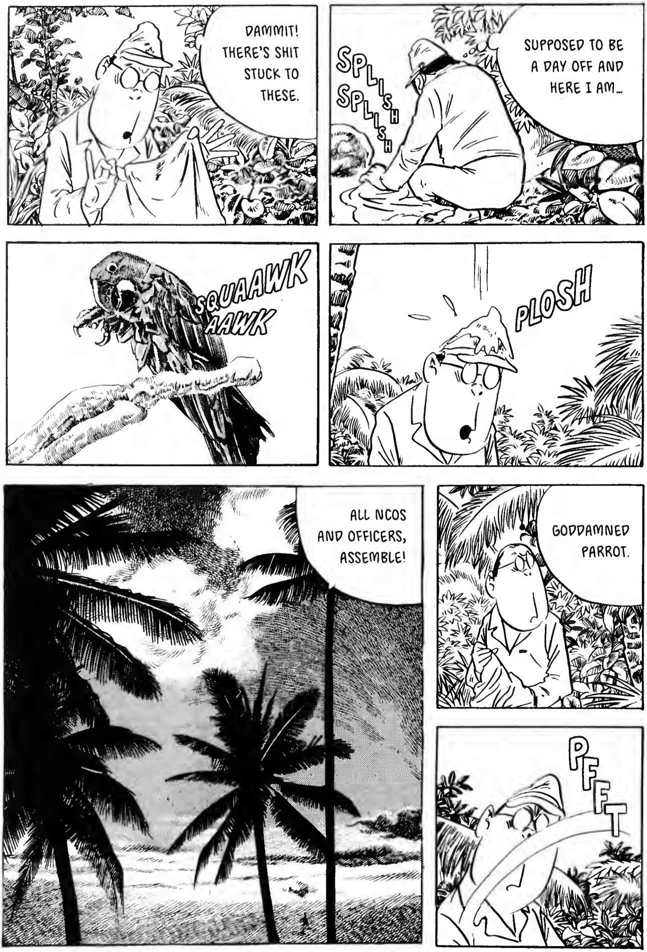
*SEE NOTES PAGE 366.

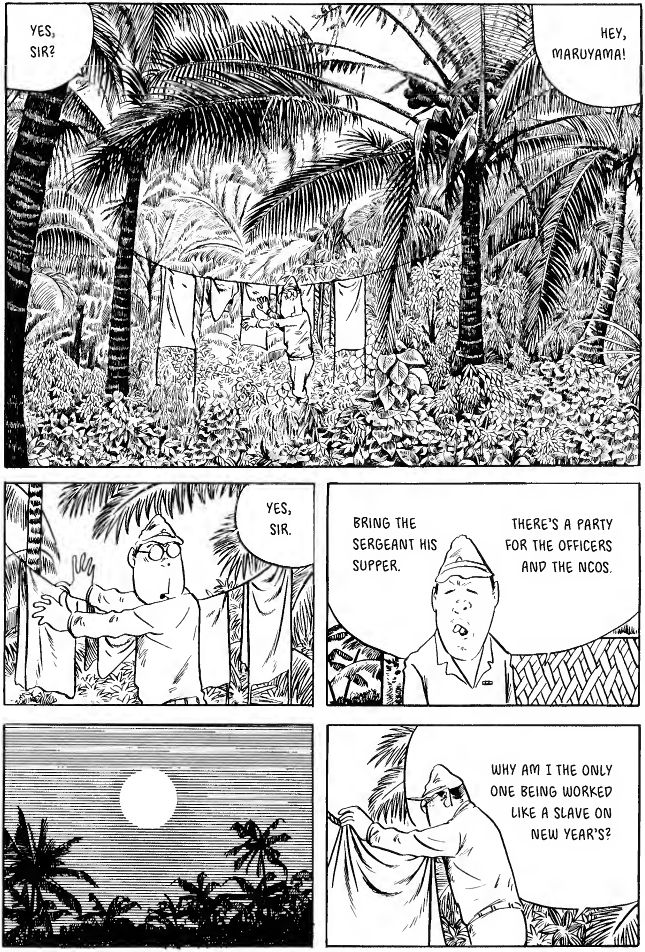

REAL BEAUTIES AND I STARE WITHOUT CARE
AND HERE I AM
HEY HEY
THREE DAYS HEY HEY
HA HA HA HA
IN THE HOLE FOR ME!

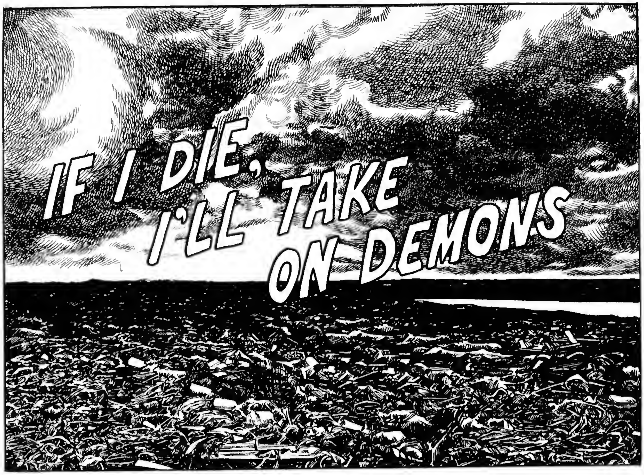

HEE HEE HEE HEE
HO HO HO HO
YOU BEST REMEMBER YOURSELF.
SIR, I APOLOGIZE.
GETTIN' A BIT CARRIED AWAY, AREN'T YOU?
BOINK
NOT YET.
UH...
YOU WASHED THE SERGEANT'S UNIFORM?
YES, SIR.
IT'S JUST YOU WHO HASN'T.
ALL YOU ROOKIES GOTTA DO IT!
COME ON!

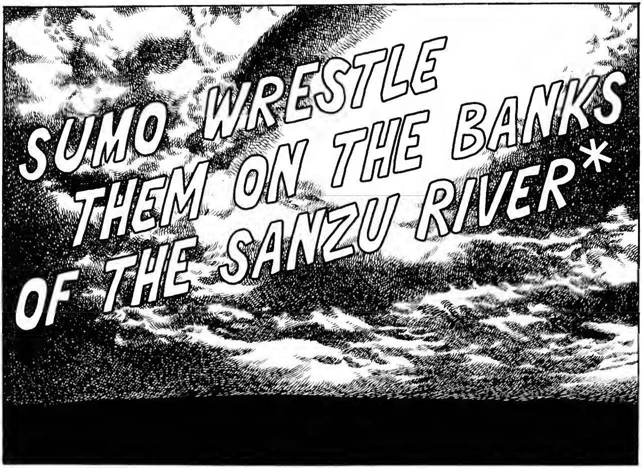

YOU DO WANNA DO IT, RIGHT?
UH, YES.
I'LL DO IT RIGHT AWAY.
YOU BETTER.
SKRTCH SKRTCH
MY LAUNDRY!?
OH, THAT'D BE GOOD.
SERGEANT, PLEASE LET ME WASH YOUR UNIFORM!
HMM?
SKRTCH SKRTCH


WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, CAN YOU DO MY SKIVVIES, TOO?
YES, SIR.
CHRIST. HIS SKIVVIES, TOO?
HEY! I STILL HAVE A BUNCH MORE HERE.

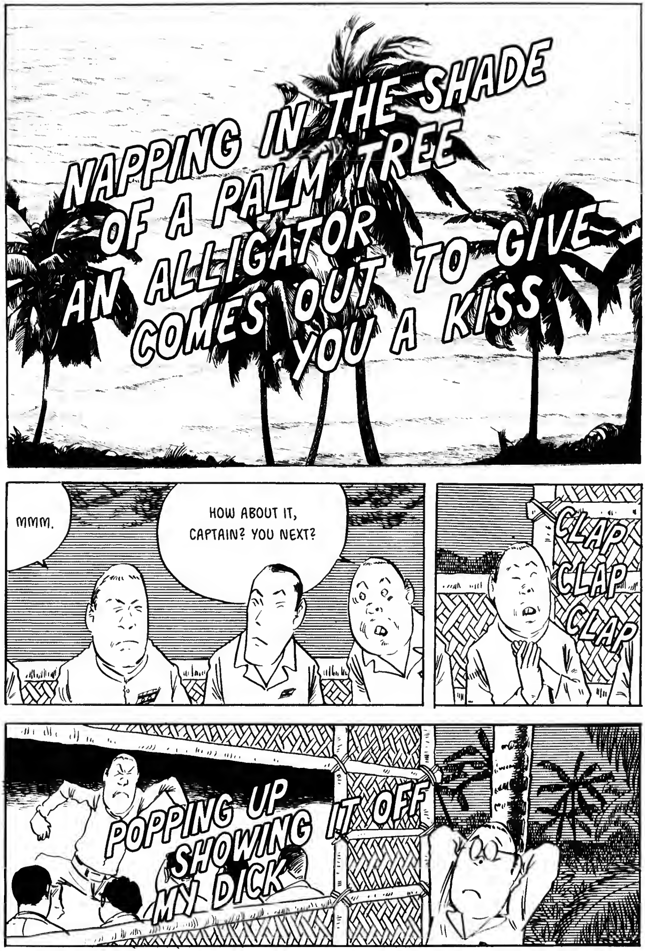

DAMMIT! THERE'S SHIT STUCK TO THESE.
SPLISH SPLISH
SUPPOSED TO BE A DAY OFF AND HERE I AM…
SQUAAAWK AAWK
PLOSH
ALL NCOS AND OFFICERS, ASSEMBLE!
GODDAMNED PARROT.
PFFT

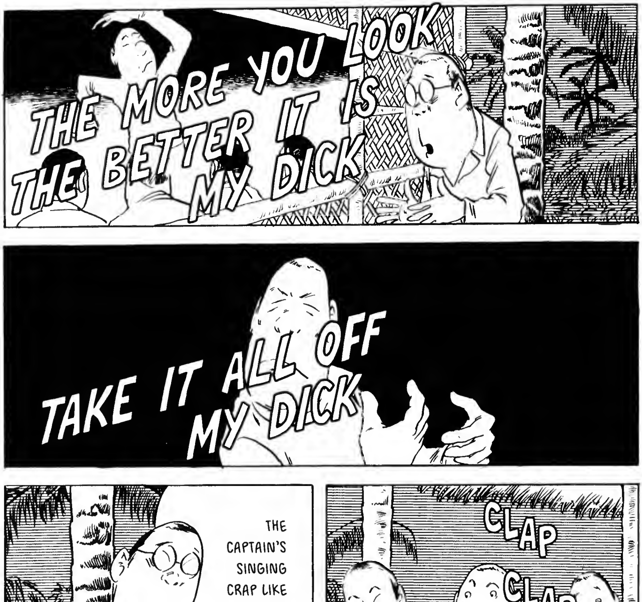

HEY, MARUYAMA!
YES, SIR?
THERE'S A PARTY FOR THE OFFICERS AND THE NCOS.
BRING THE SERGEANT HIS SUPPER.
YES, SIR.
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE BEING WORKED LIKE A SLAVE ON NEW YEAR'S?

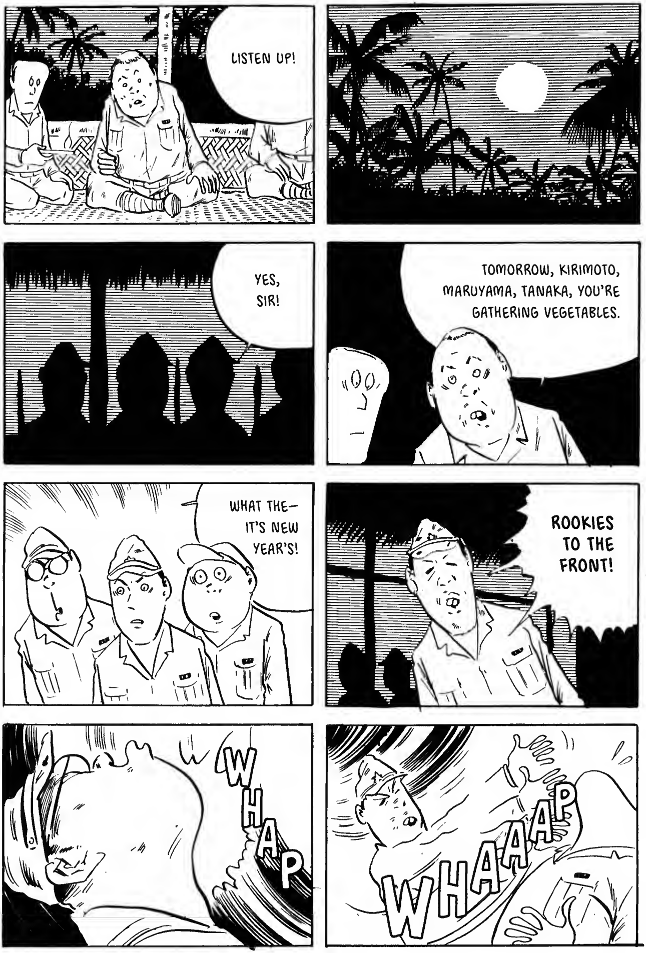

IF I DIE,
I'LL TAKE
ON DEMONS

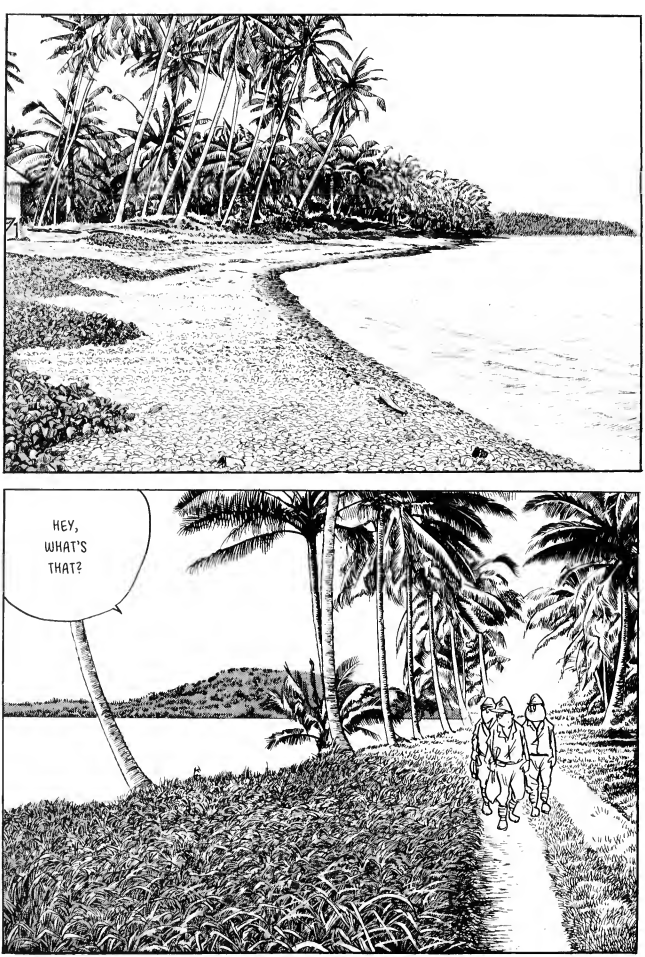

SUMO WRESTLE
THEM ON THE BANKS
OF THE SANZU RIVER*

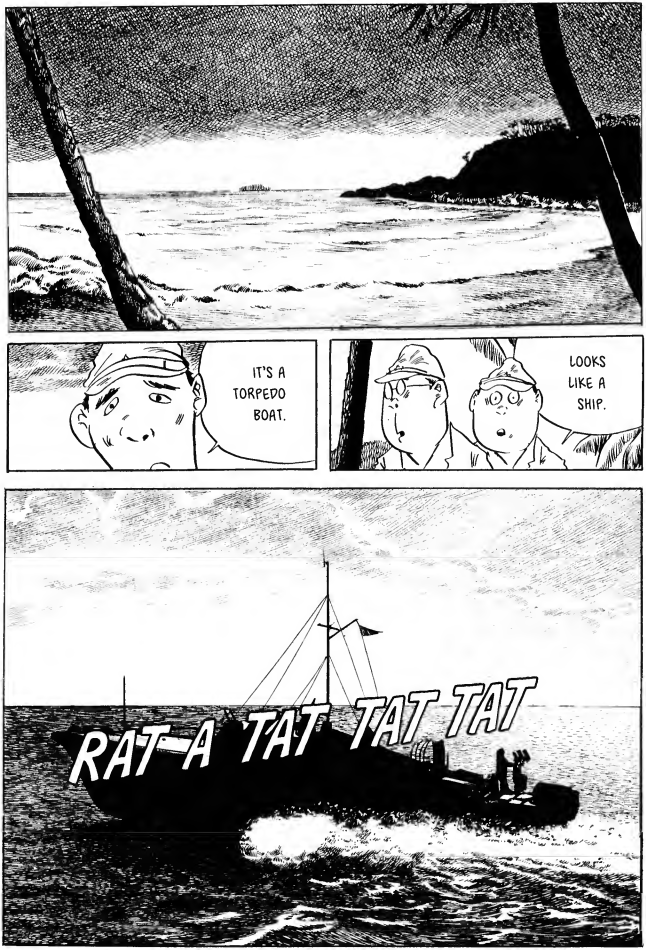
*SEE NOTES ON PAGE 366.

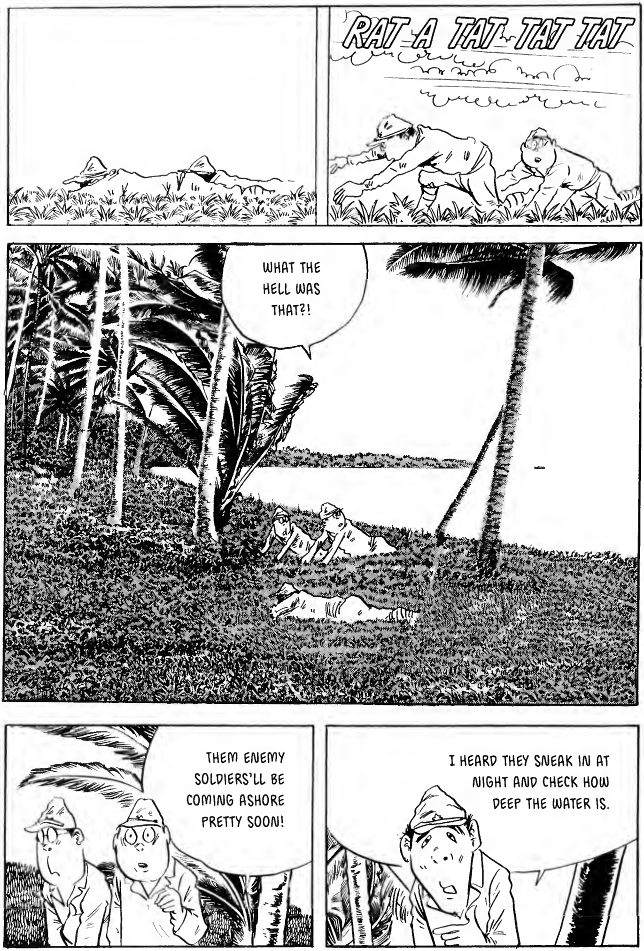

NAPPING IN THE SHADE
OF A PALM TREE
AN ALLIGATOR
COMES OUT TO GIVE
YOU A KISS
MMM.
HOW ABOUT IT, CAPTAIN? YOU NEXT?
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
POPPING UP
SHOWING IT OFF
MY DICK

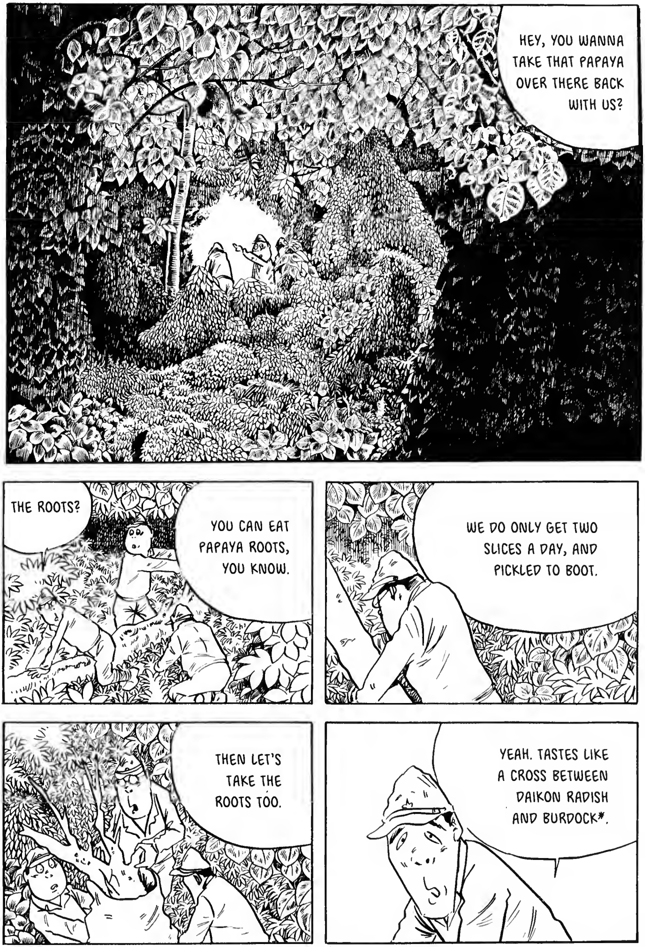

THE MORE YOU LOOK
THE BETTER IT IS
MY DICK
TAKE IT ALL OFF
MY DICK
THE CAPTAIN'S SINGING CRAP LIKE THIS?
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
HERE YOU ARE, SIR.
HEY! SUPPER!


LISTEN UP!
YES, SIR!
TOMORROW, KIRIMOTO, MARUYAMA, TANAKA, YOU'RE GATHERING VEGETABLES.
WHAT THE— IT'S NEW YEAR'S!
ROOKIES TO THE FRONT!
WHAP
WHAAAAP

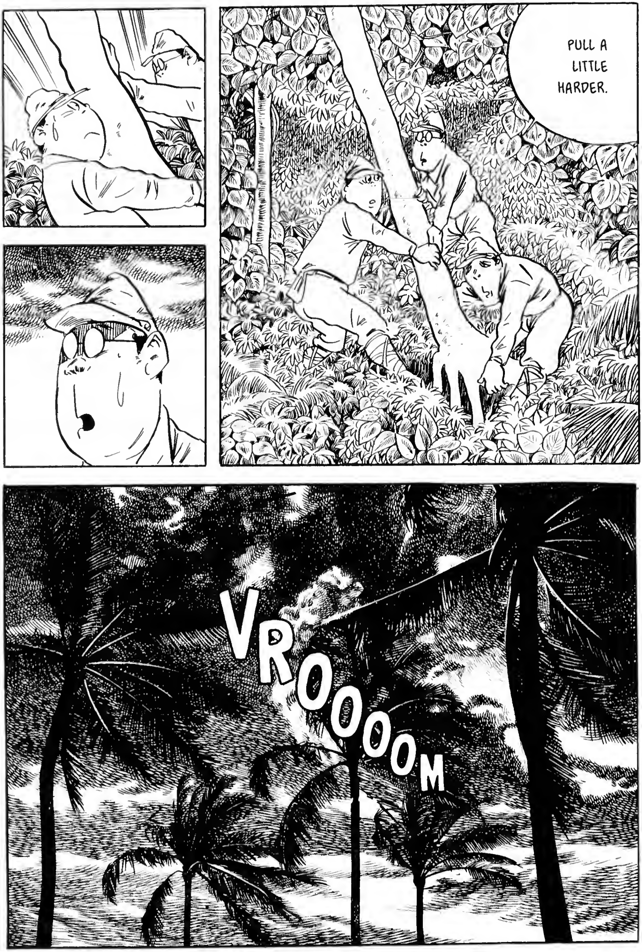

HEY, WHAT'S THAT?

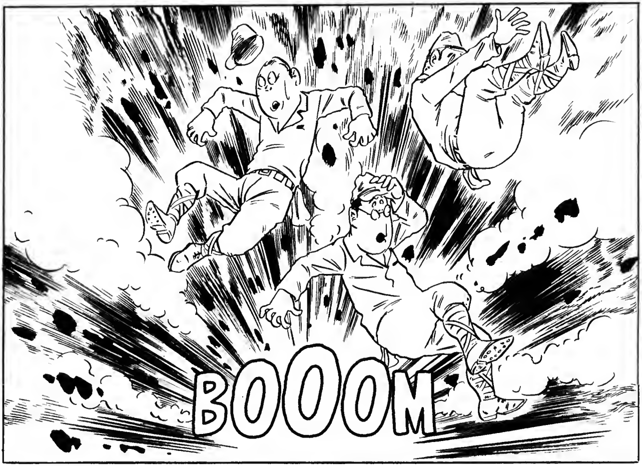

IT'S A TORPEDO BOAT.
LOOKS LIKE A SHIP.
RAT-A TAT TAT TAT

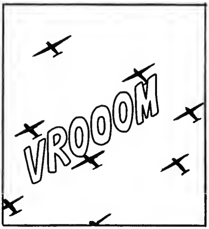

RAT-A TAT-TAT TAT TAT
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!
THEM ENEMY SOLDIERS'LL BE COMING ASHORE PRETTY SOON!
I HEARD THEY SNEAK IN AT NIGHT AND CHECK HOW DEEP THE WATER IS.

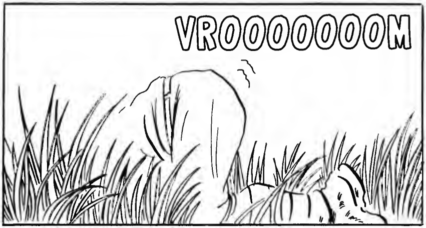

HEY, YOU WANNA TAKE THAT PAPAYA OVER THERE BACK WITH US?
THE ROOTS?
YOU CAN EAT PAPAYA ROOTS, YOU KNOW.
WE DO ONLY GET TWO SLICES A DAY, AND PICKLED TO BOOT.
THEN LET'S TAKE THE ROOTS TOO.
YEAH. TASTES LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN DAIKON RADISH AND BURDOCK*.

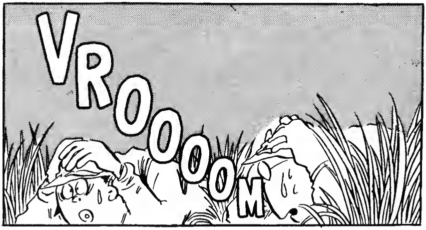
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

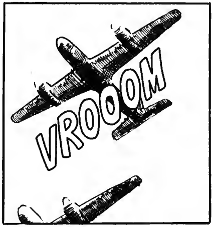

PULL A LITTLE HARDER.
VROOOOOM

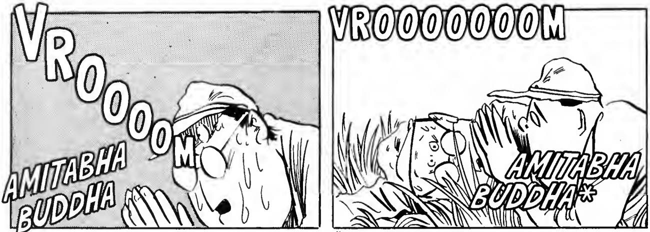

BOOOM


VROOOM

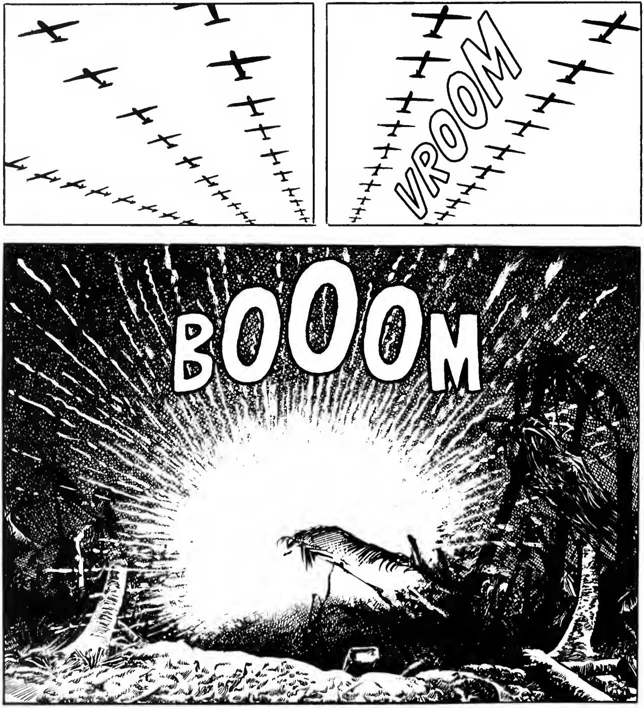

VROOOOOOOOM

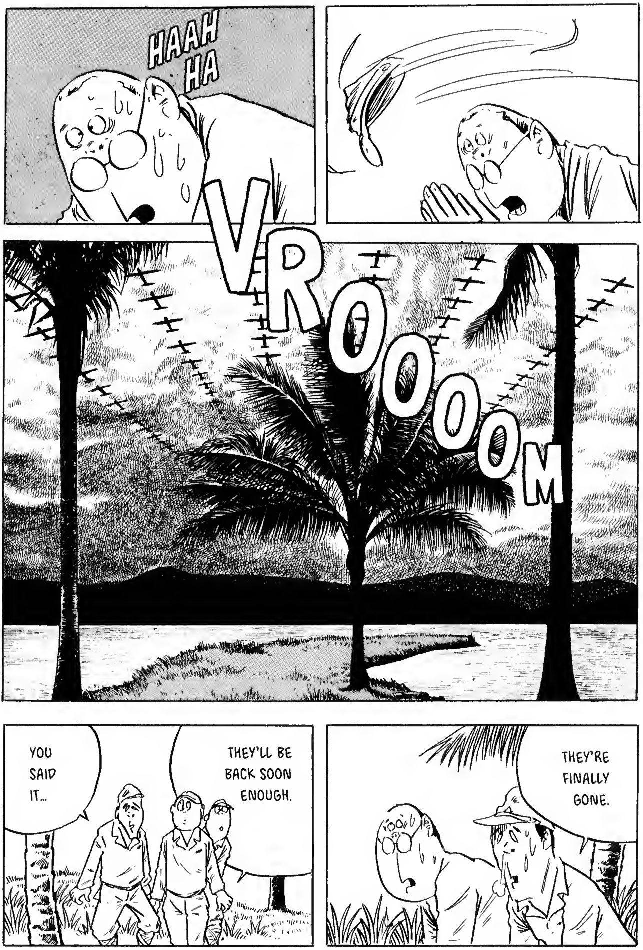

VROOOOM

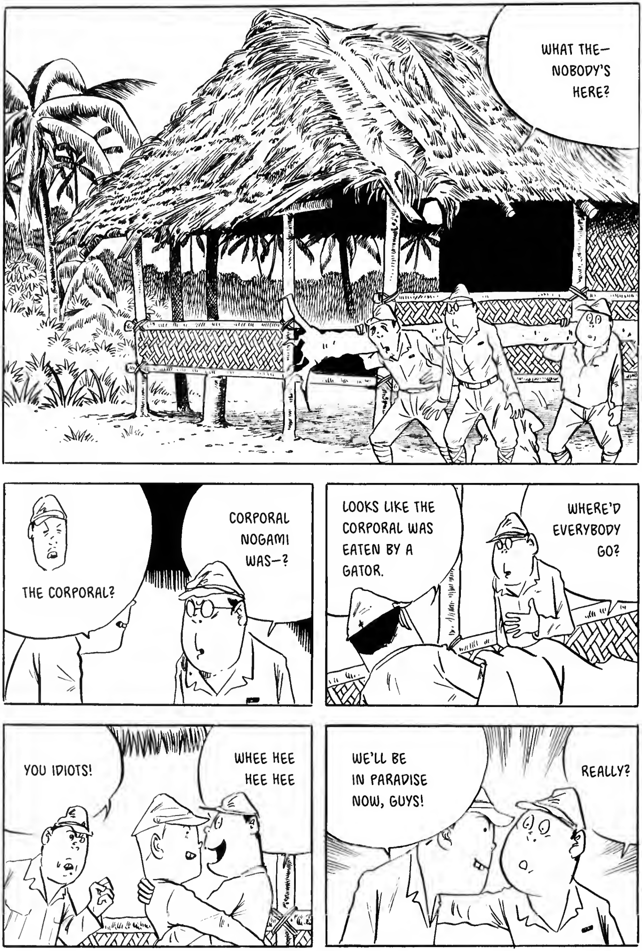

VROOOM

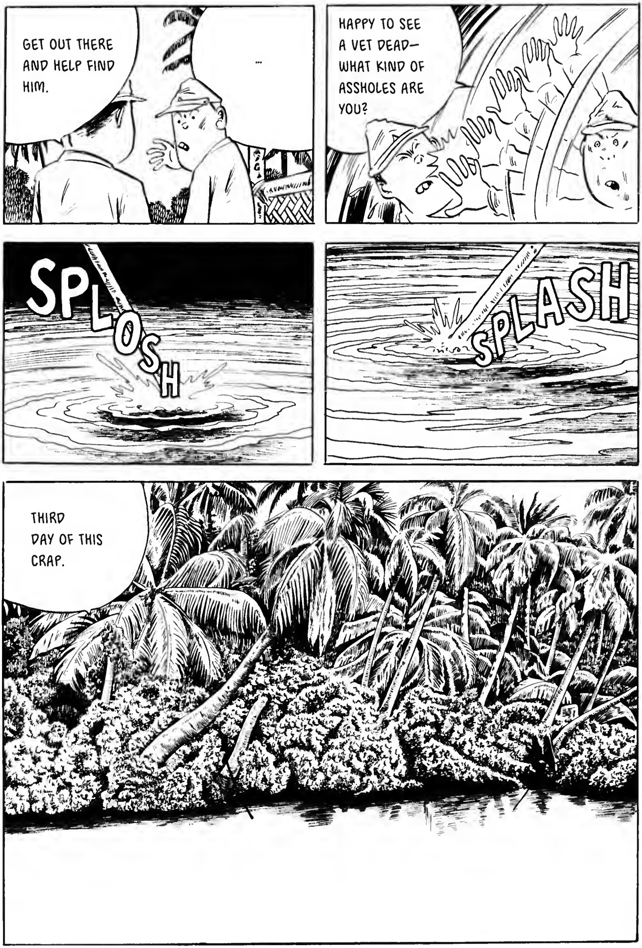

VROOOOOM
AMITABHA BUDDHA
VROOOOOOOOM
AMITABHA BUDDHA*

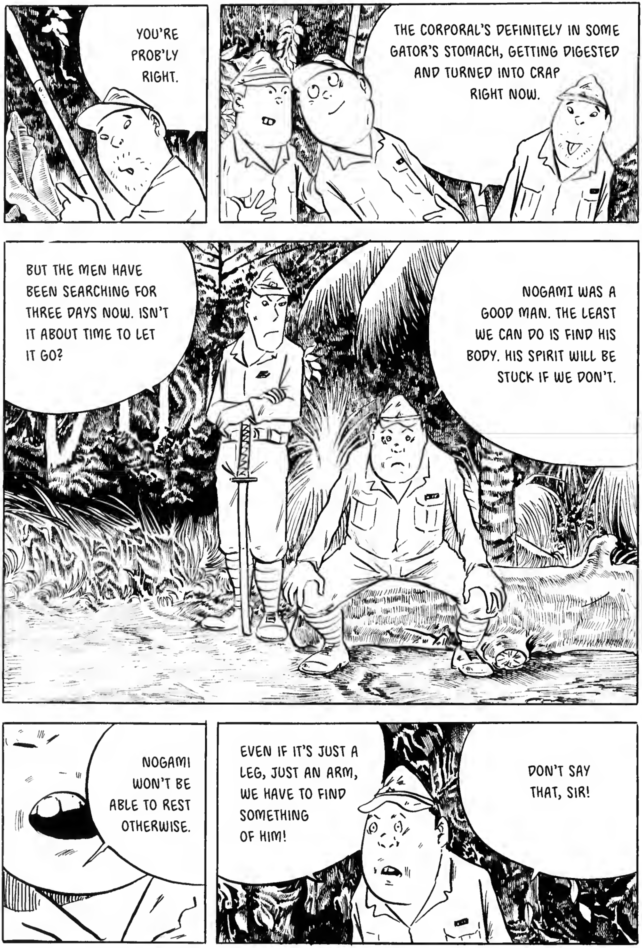
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

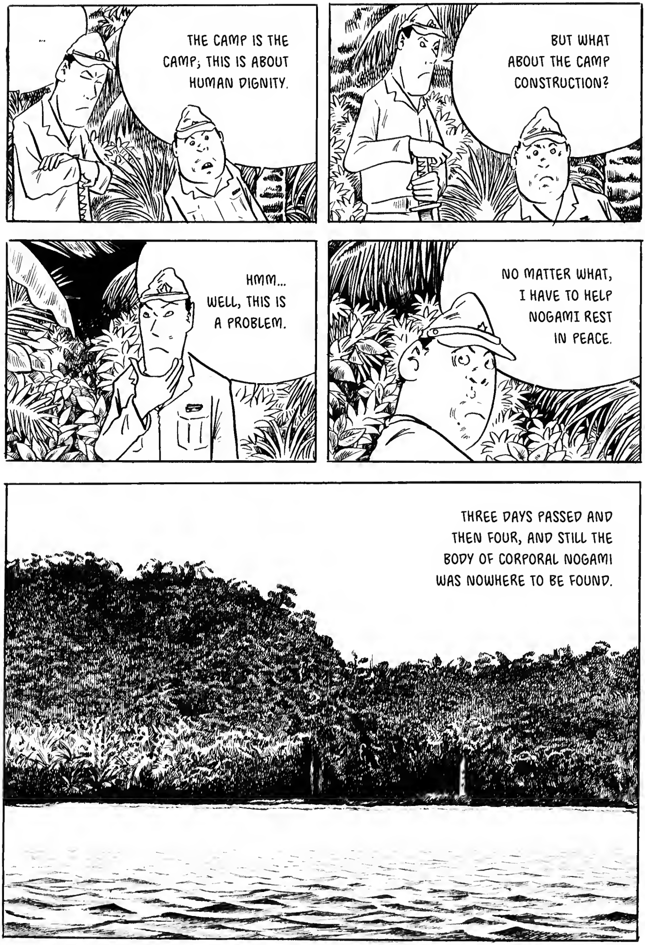

VROOM
BOOOM

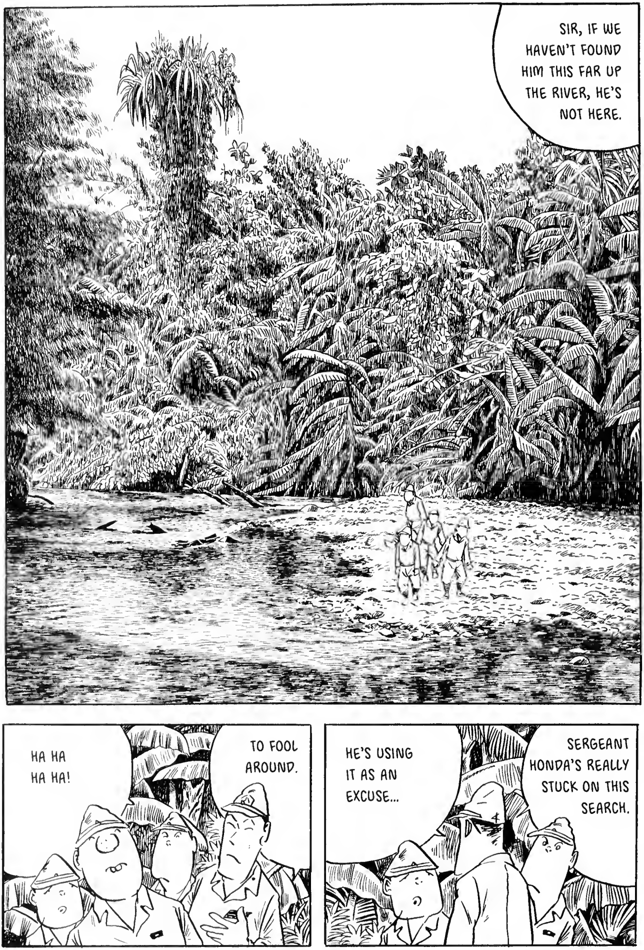

HAAH HA
VROOOOOM
THEY'RE FINALLY GONE.
THEY'LL BE BACK SOON ENOUGH.
YOU SAID IT...

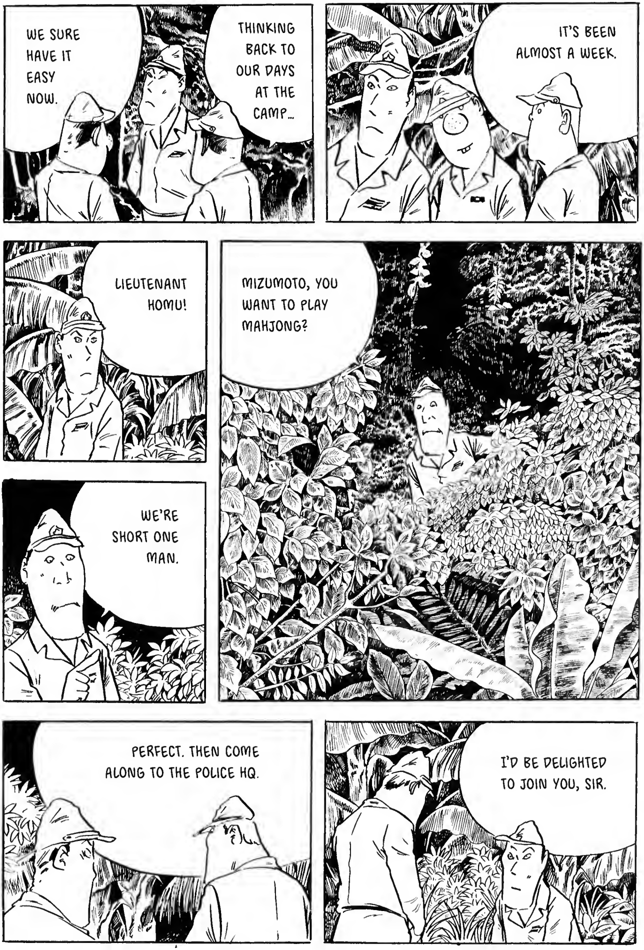

WHAT THE— NOBODY'S HERE?
WHERE'D EVERYBODY GO?
LOOKS LIKE THE CORPORAL WAS EATEN BY A GATOR.
CORPORAL NOGAMI WAS—?
THE CORPORAL?
REALLY?
WE'LL BE IN PARADISE NOW, GUYS!
WHEE HEE HEE HEE
YOU IDIOTS!

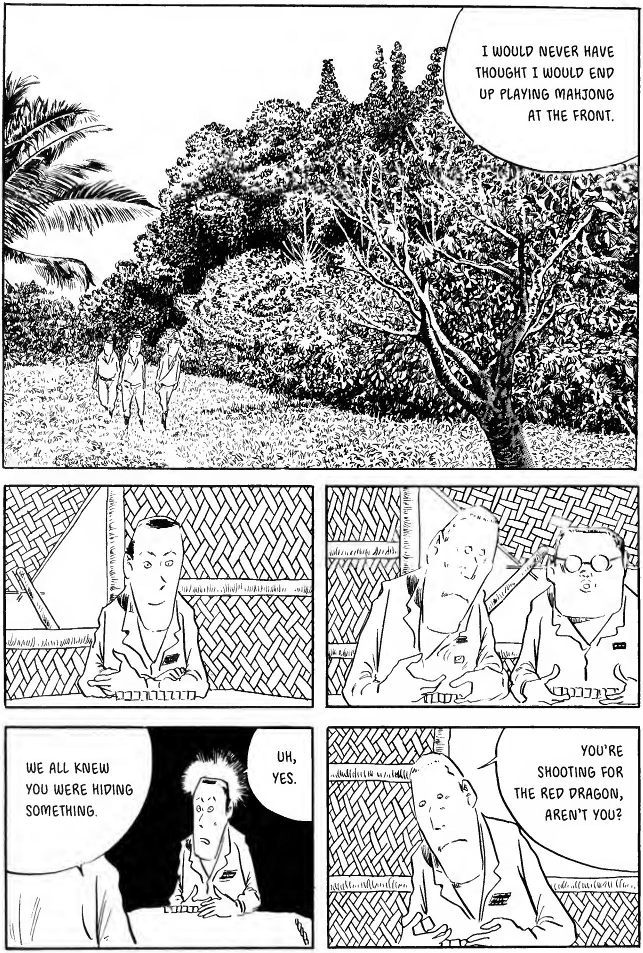

GET OUT THERE AND HELP FIND HIM.
…
HAPPY TO SEE A VET DEAD— WHAT KIND OF ASSHOLES ARE YOU?
SPLOSH
SPLASH
THIRD DAY OF THIS CRAP.

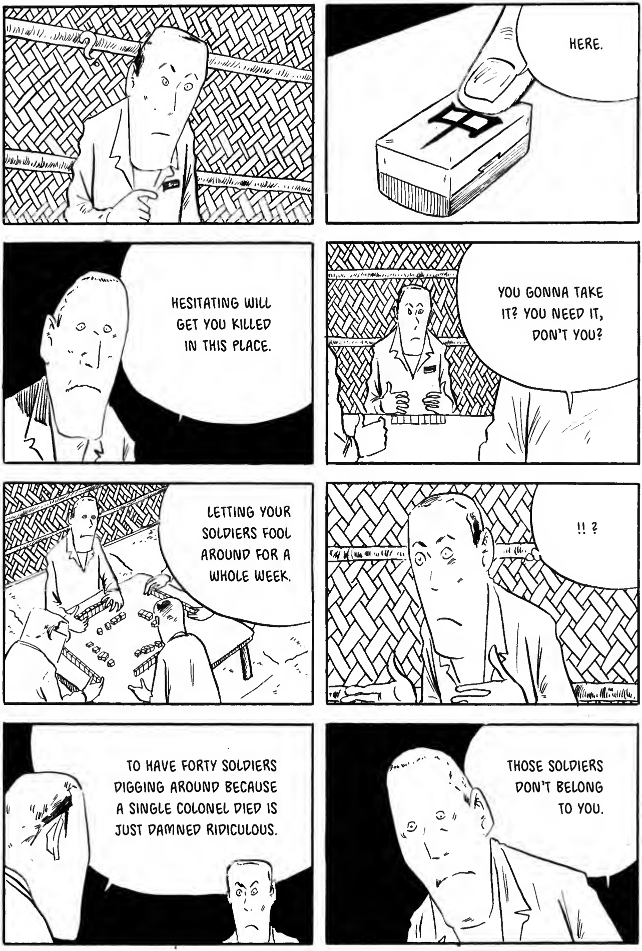

YOU'RE PROB'LY RIGHT.
THE CORPORAL'S DEFINITELY IN SOME GATOR'S STOMACH, GETTING DIGESTED AND TURNED INTO CRAP RIGHT NOW.
BUT THE MEN HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THREE DAYS NOW. ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME TO LET IT GO?
NOGAMI WAS A GOOD MAN. THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS FIND HIS BODY. HIS SPIRIT WILL BE STUCK IF WE DON'T.
NOGAMI WON'T BE ABLE TO REST OTHERWISE.
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A LEG, JUST AN ARM, WE HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING OF HIM!
DON'T SAY THAT, SIR!

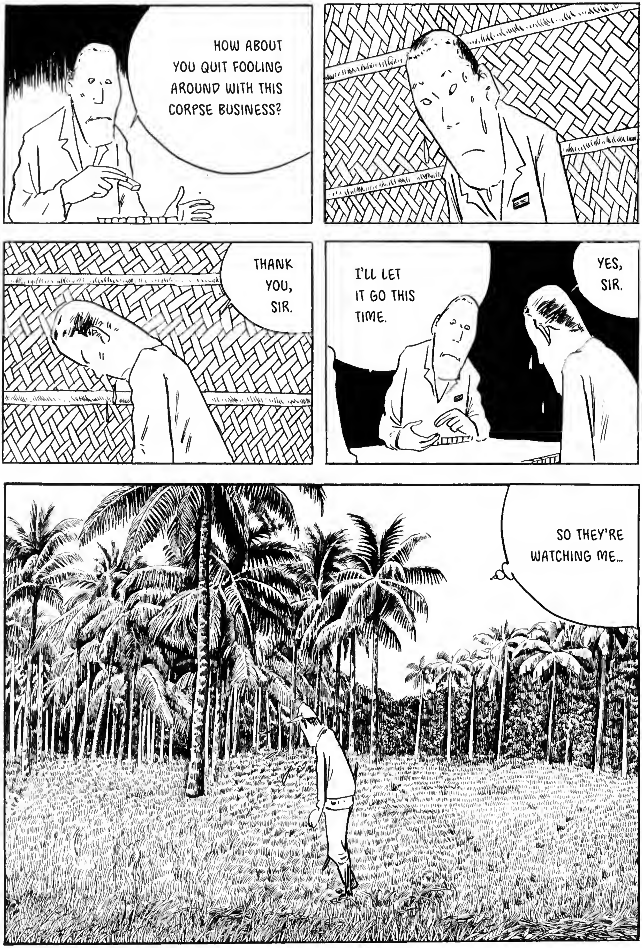

...
THE CAMP IS THE CAMP; THIS IS ABOUT HUMAN DIGNITY.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CAMP CONSTRUCTION?
HMM... WELL, THIS IS A PROBLEM.
NO MATTER WHAT, I HAVE TO HELP NOGAMI REST IN PEACE.
THREE DAYS PASSED AND THEN FOUR, AND STILL THE BODY OF CORPORAL NOGAMI WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.


SIR, IF WE HAVEN'T FOUND HIM THIS FAR UP THE RIVER, HE'S NOT HERE.
SERGEANT HONDA'S REALLY STUCK ON THIS SEARCH.
HE'S USING IT AS AN EXCUSE...
TO FOOL AROUND.
HA HA HA HA!

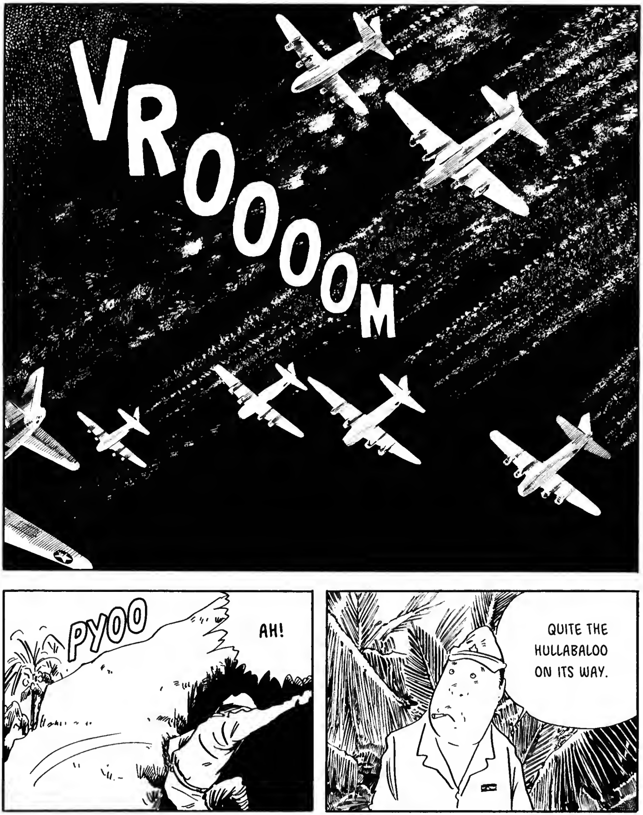

WE SURE HAVE IT EASY NOW.
THINKING BACK TO OUR DAYS AT THE CAMP...
IT'S BEEN ALMOST A WEEK.
LIEUTENANT HOMU!
MIZUMOTO, YOU WANT TO PLAY MAHJONG?
WE'RE SHORT ONE MAN.
PERFECT. THEN COME ALONG TO THE POLICE HQ.
I'D BE DELIGHTED TO JOIN YOU, SIR.

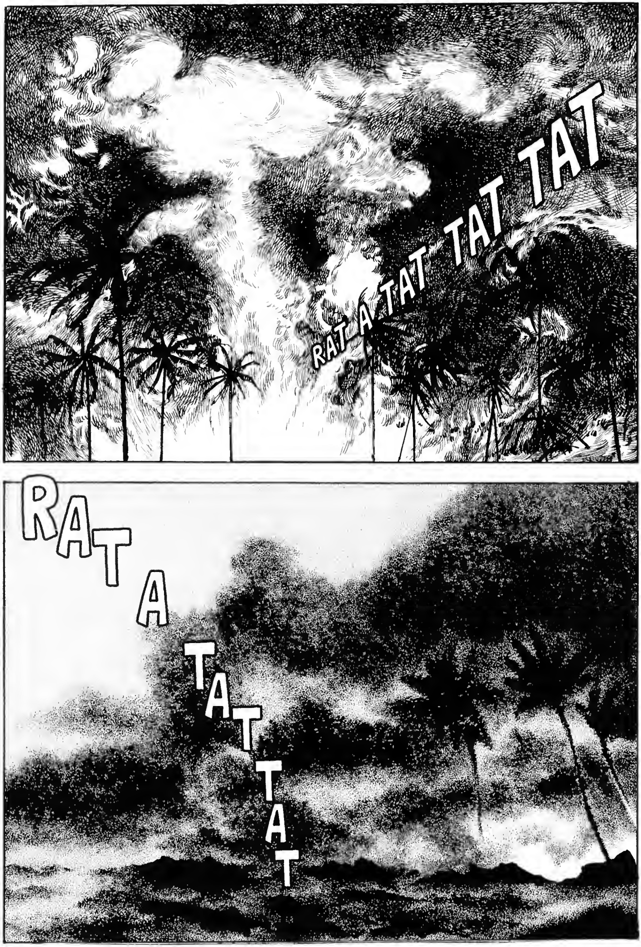

I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT I WOULD END UP PLAYING MAHJONG AT THE FRONT.
WE ALL KNEW YOU WERE HIDING SOMETHING.
UH, YES.
YOU'RE SHOOTING FOR THE RED DRAGON, AREN'T YOU?

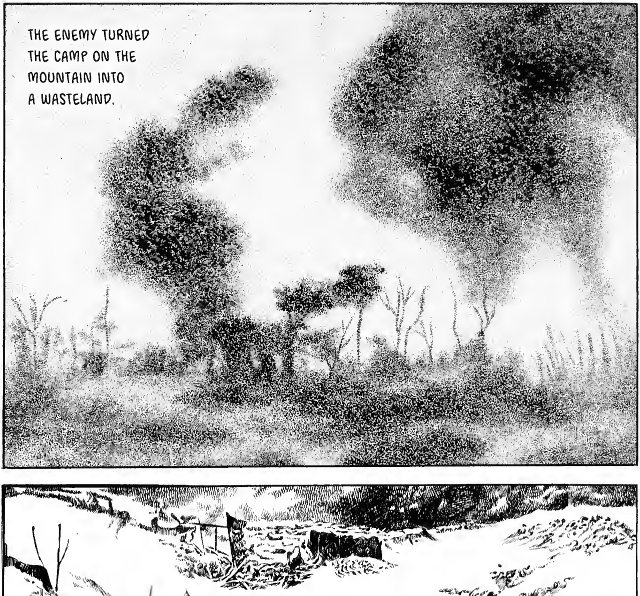

?
HERE.
HESITATING WILL GET YOU KILLED IN THIS PLACE.
YOU GONNA TAKE IT? YOU NEED IT, DON'T YOU?
LETTING YOUR SOLDIERS FOOL AROUND FOR A WHOLE WEEK.
!! ?
TO HAVE FORTY SOLDIERS DIGGING AROUND BECAUSE A SINGLE COLONEL DIED IS JUST DAMNED RIDICULOUS.
THOSE SOLDIERS DON'T BELONG TO YOU.

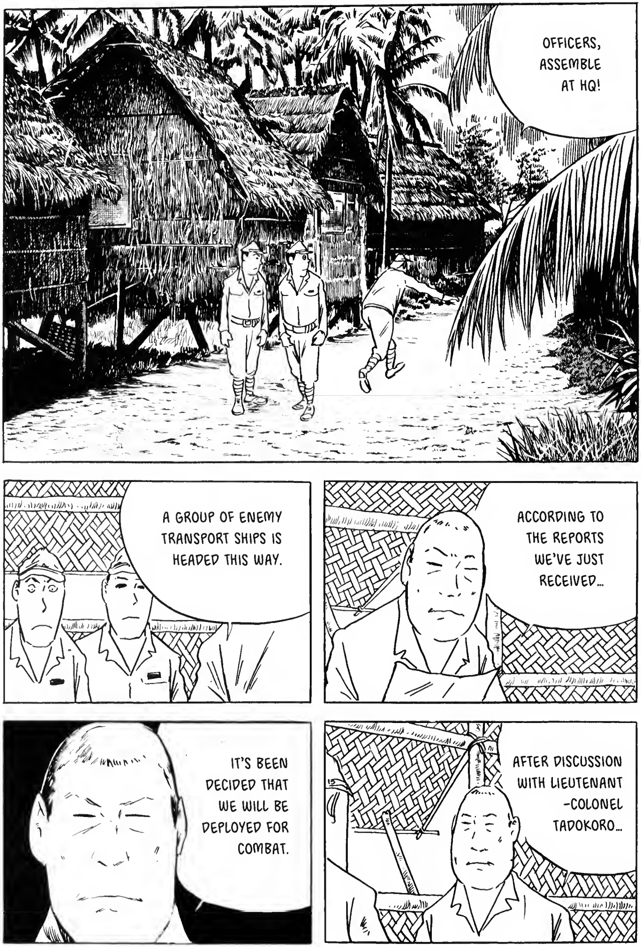

HOW ABOUT YOU QUIT FOOLING AROUND WITH THIS CORPSE BUSINESS?
THANK YOU, SIR.
I'LL LET IT GO THIS TIME.
YES, SIR.
SO THEY'RE WATCHING ME...

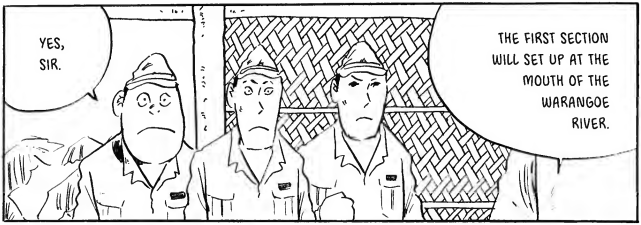
THE ENEMY ARRIVES

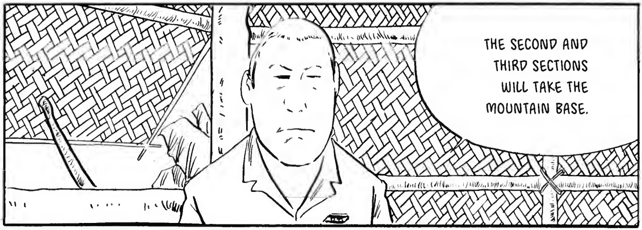

VROOOOOM
PYOO
AH!
QUITE THE HULLABALOO ON ITS WAY.

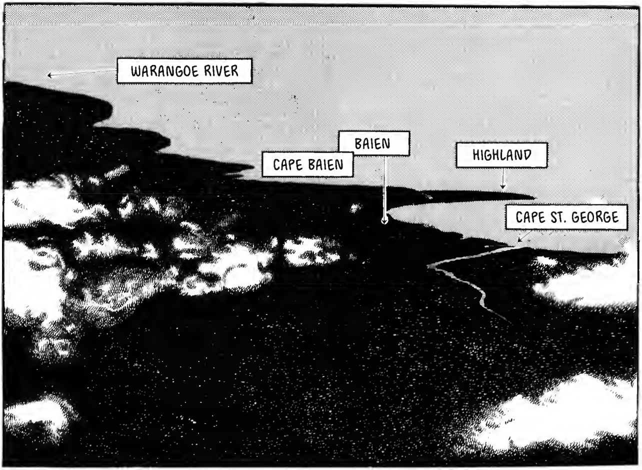

RAT A TAT TAT TAT
RAT A TAT TAT

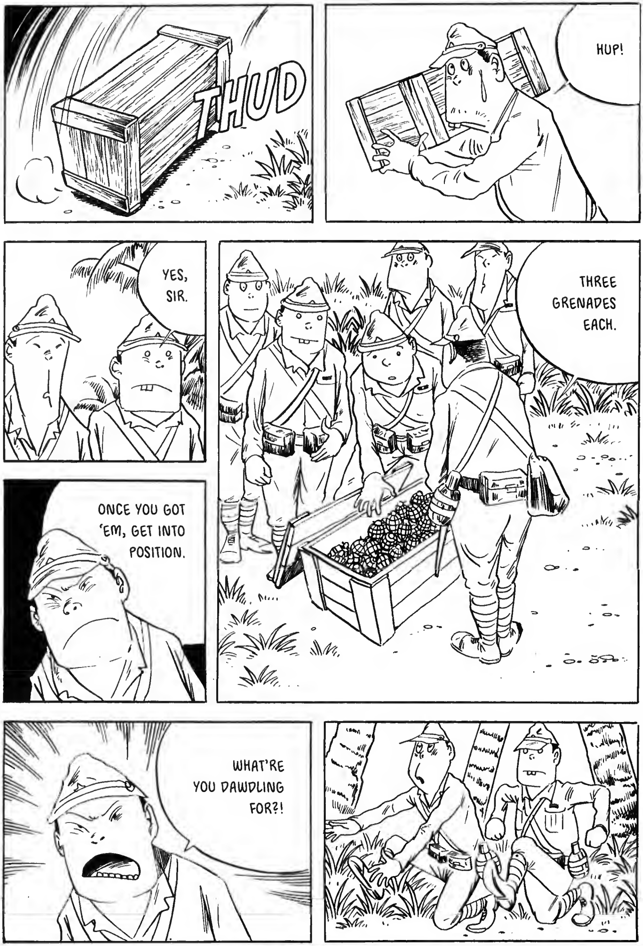

THE ENEMY TURNED THE CAMP ON THE MOUNTAIN INTO A WASTELAND.

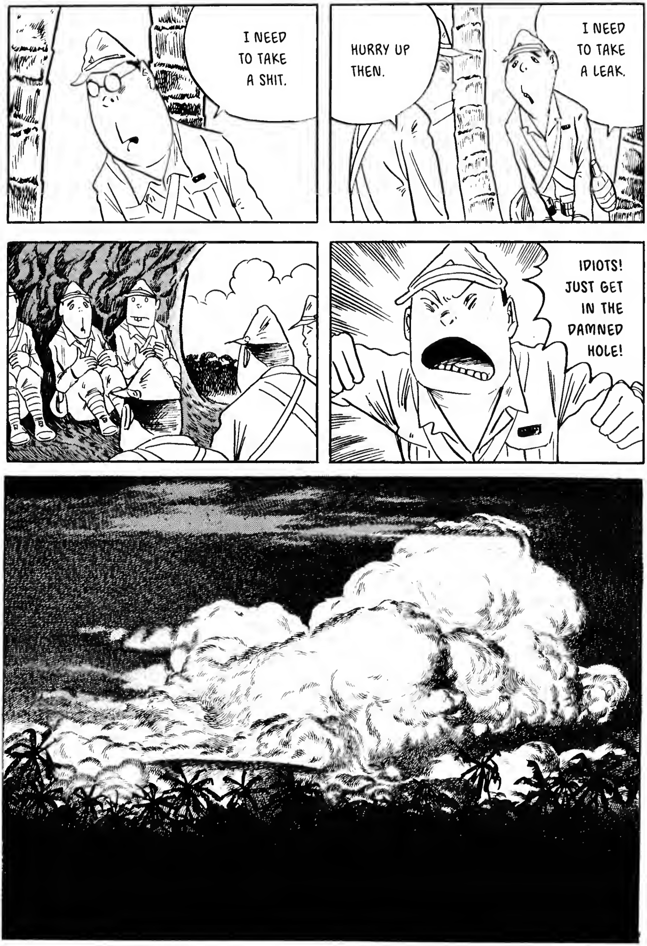

OFFICERS, ASSEMBLE AT HQ!
ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS WE'VE JUST RECEIVED...
A GROUP OF ENEMY TRANSPORT SHIPS IS HEADED THIS WAY.
AFTER DISCUSSION WITH LIEUTENANT-COLONEL TADOKORO...
IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT WE WILL BE DEPLOYED FOR COMBAT.

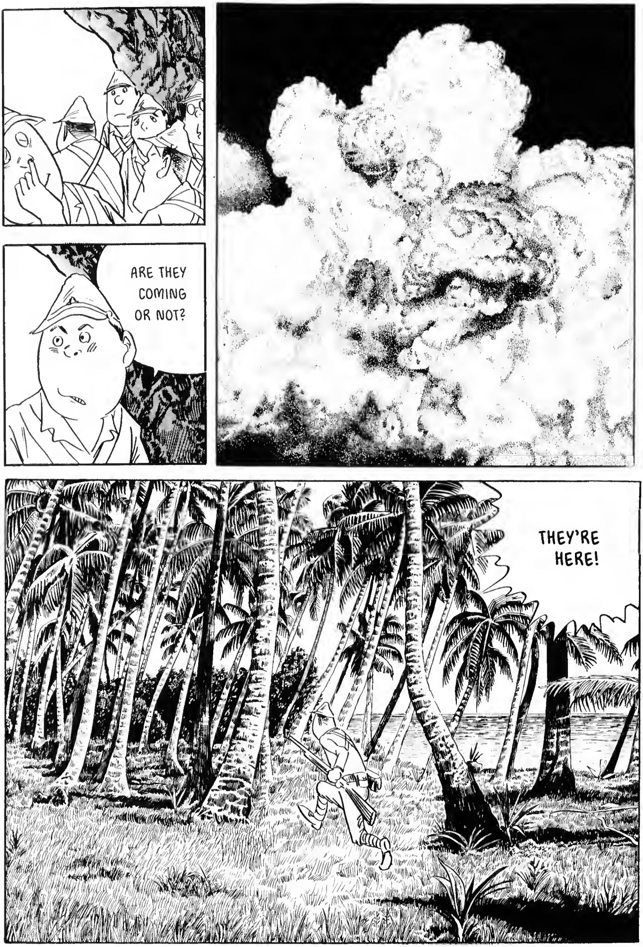

YES, SIR.
THE FIRST SECTION WILL SET UP AT THE MOUTH OF THE WARANGOE RIVER.

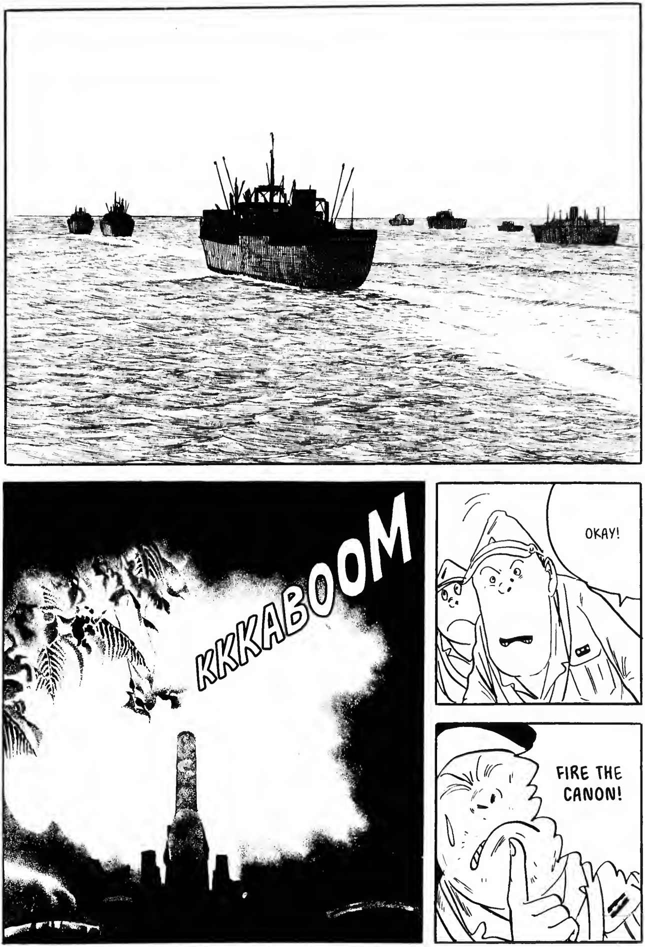

THE SECOND AND THIRD SECTIONS WILL TAKE THE MOUNTAIN BASE.

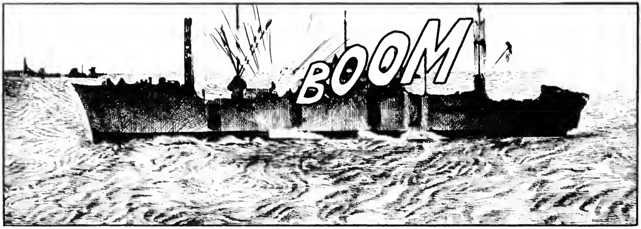

WARANGOE RIVER
BAIEN
CAPE BAIEN
HIGHLAND
CAPE ST. GEORGE

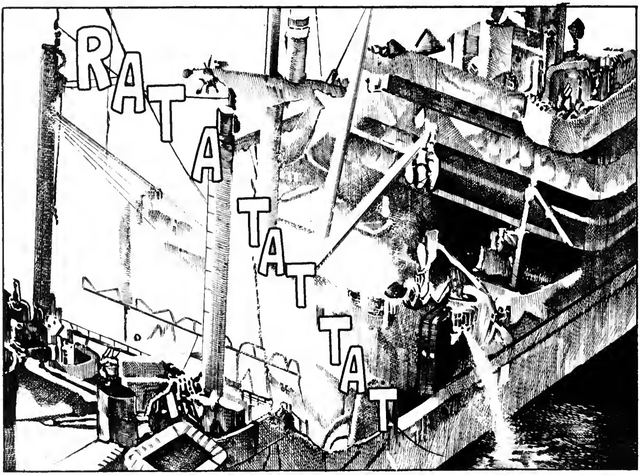

THUD
HUP!
YES, SIR.
THREE GRENADES EACH.
ONCE YOU GOT 'EM, GET INTO POSITION.
WHAT'RE YOU DAWDLING FOR?!

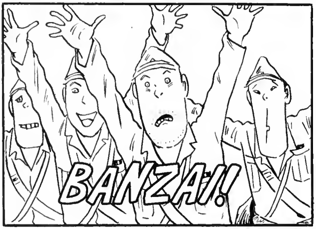

I NEED TO TAKE A SHIT.
HURRY UP THEN.
I NEED TO TAKE A LEAK.
IDIOTS! JUST GET IN THE DAMNED HOLE!

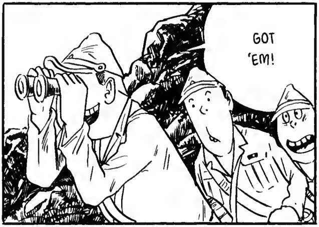

ARE THEY COMING OR NOT?
THEY'RE HERE!

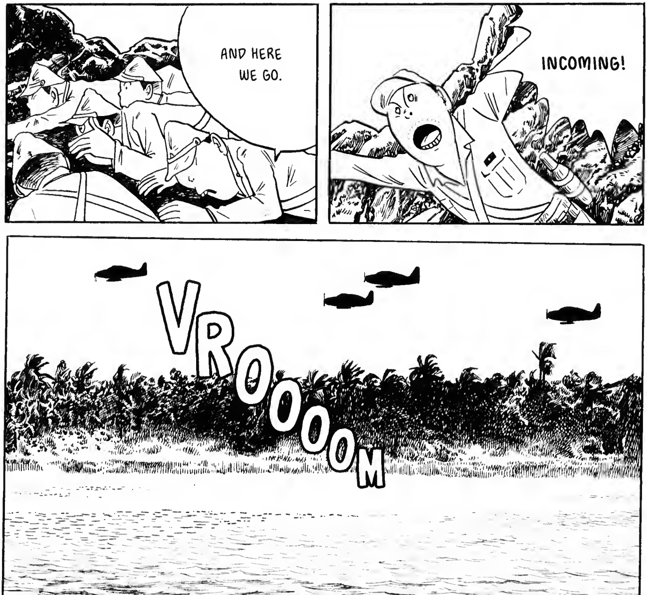

KKKABOOM
OKAY!
FIRE THE CANON!

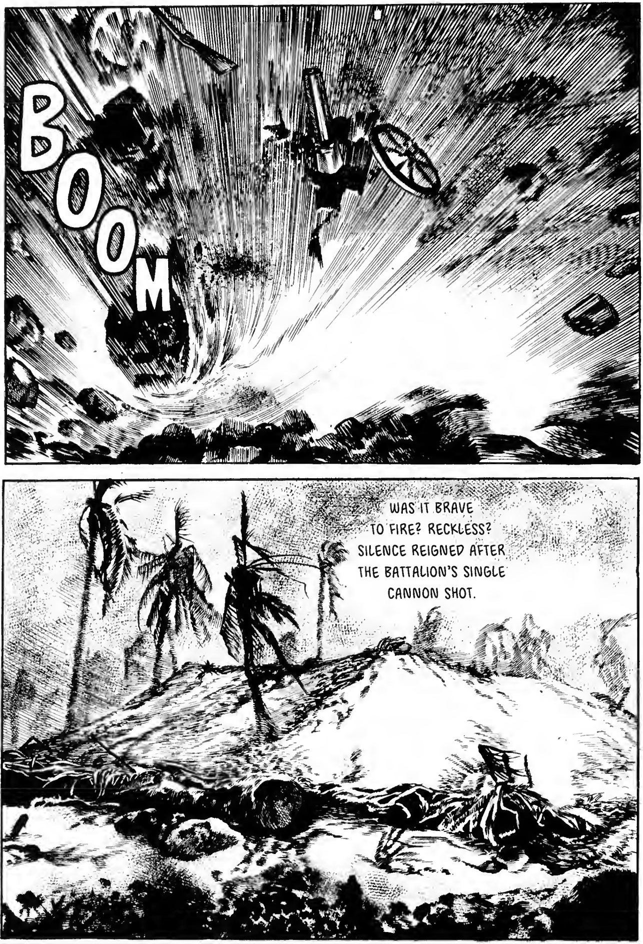

BOOM

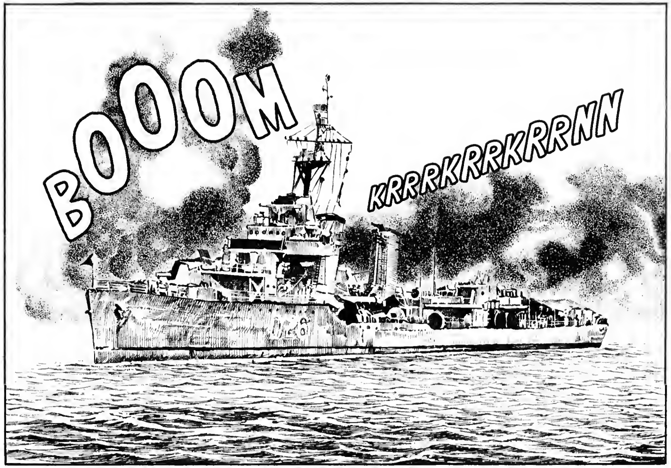

RATATATATAT

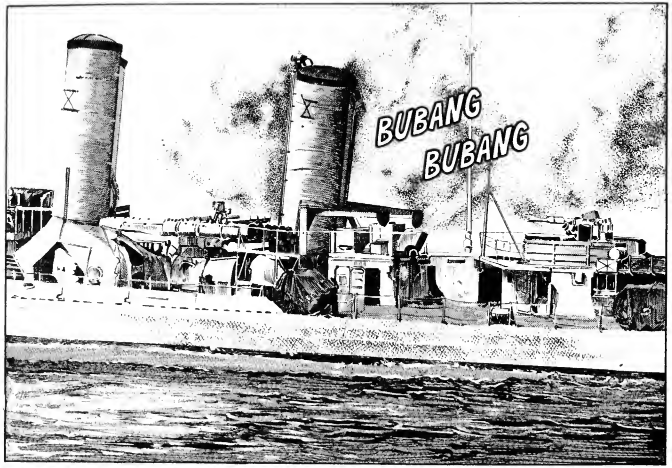

BANZAI!

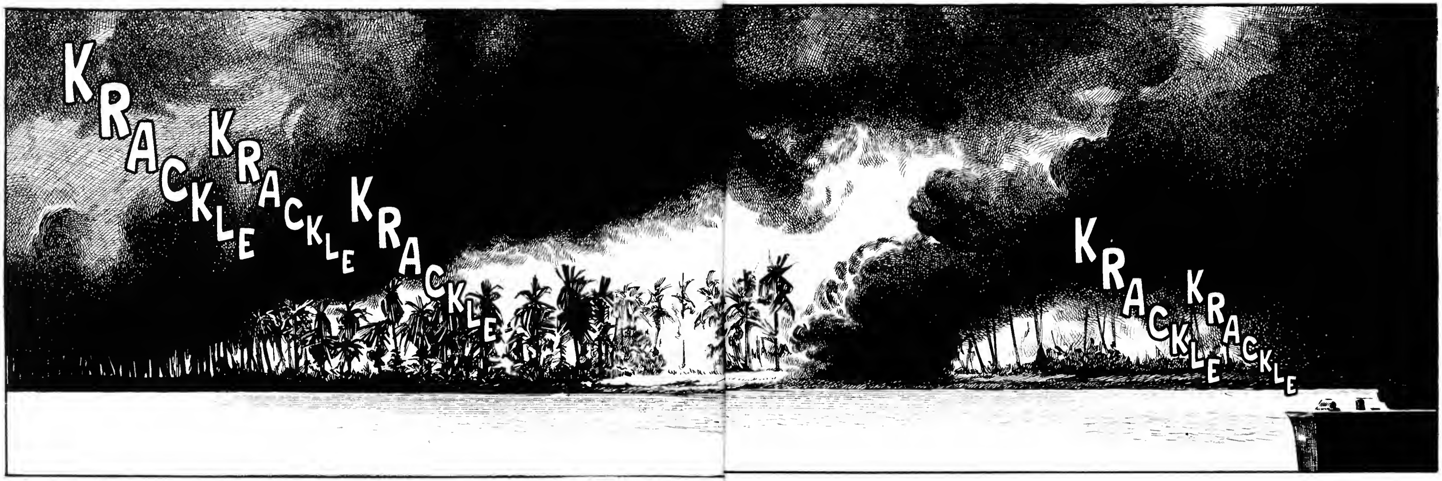

GOT 'EM!

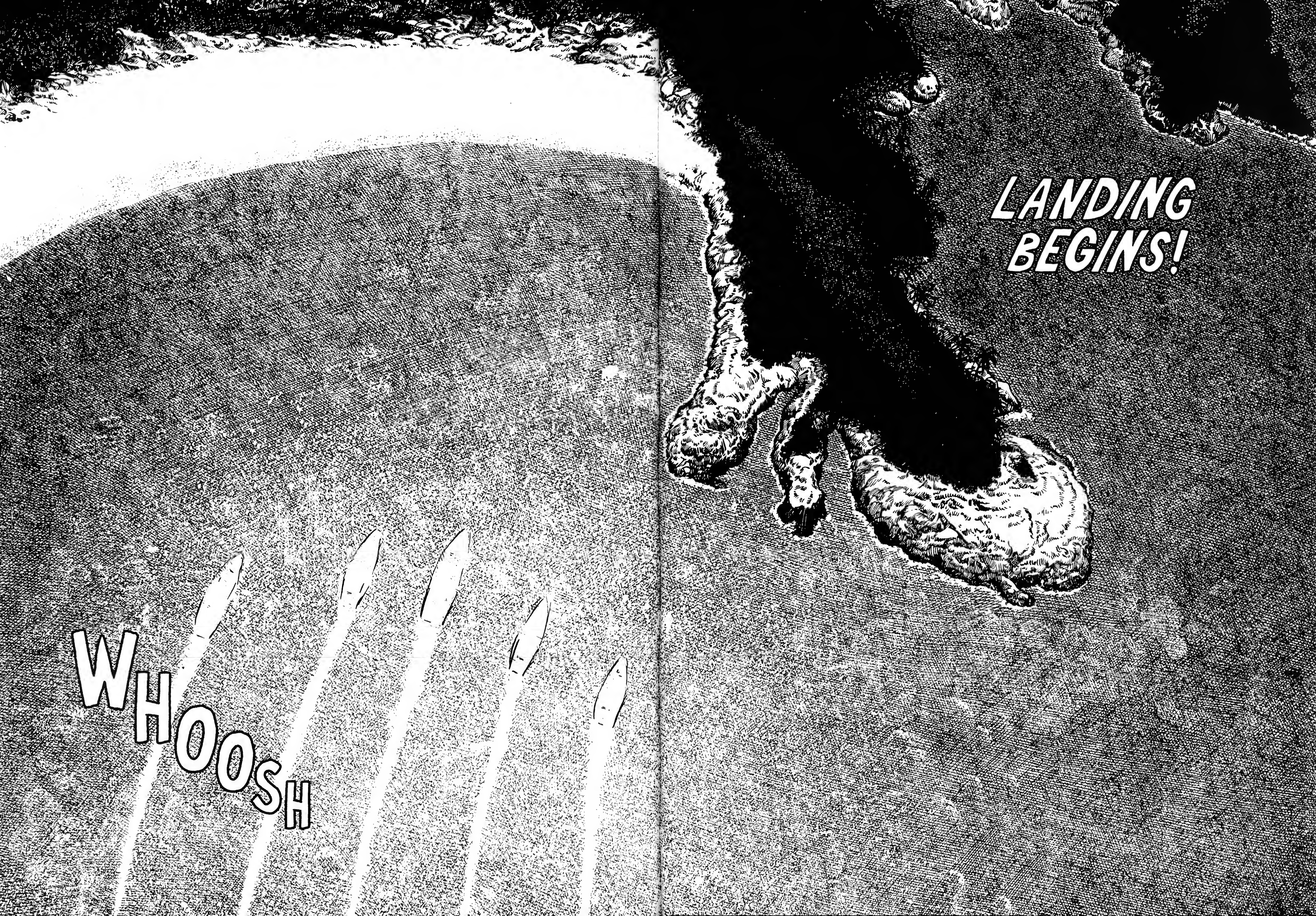

AND HERE WE GO.
INCOMING!
VROOOOOM
RAT A TAT TAT TAT

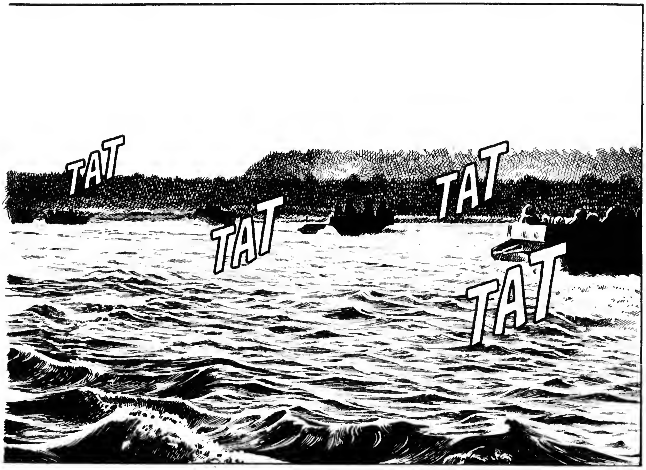

BOOM
WAS IT BRAVE TO FIRE? RECKLESS? SILENCE REIGNED AFTER THE BATTALION'S SINGLE CANNON SHOT.

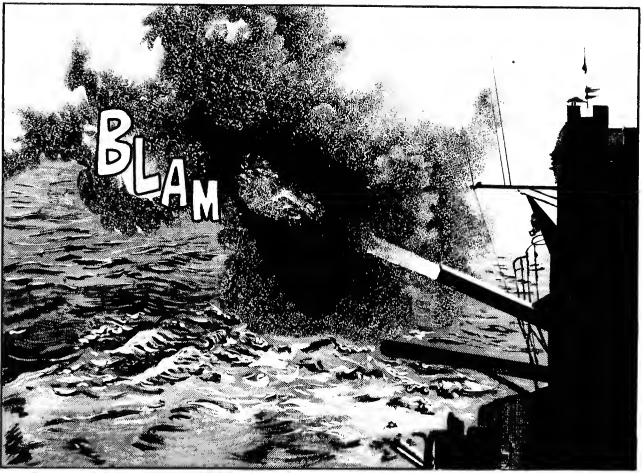

BOOOM
KRRRKRRKRRNN

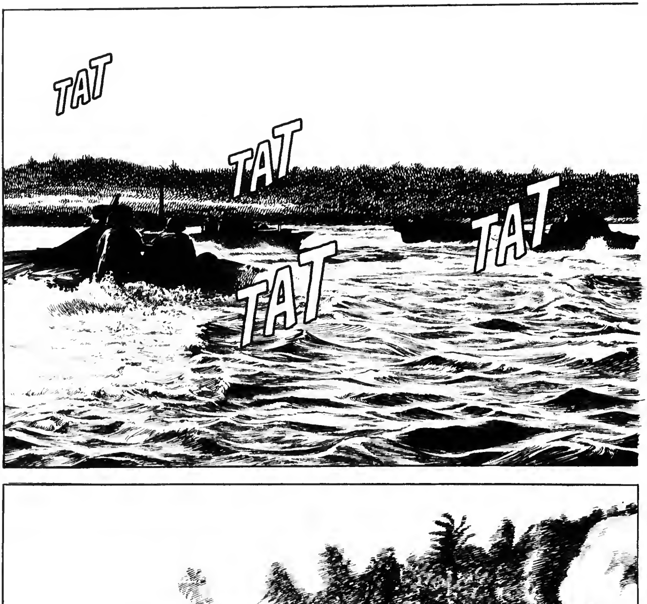

BUBANG
BUBANG

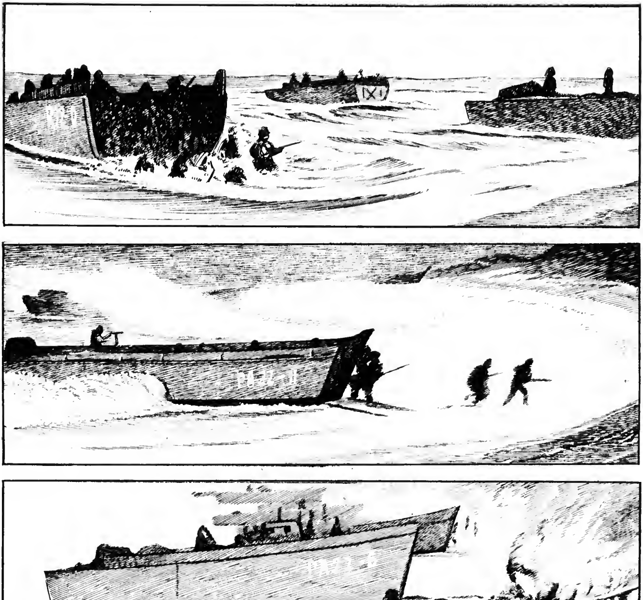

KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE

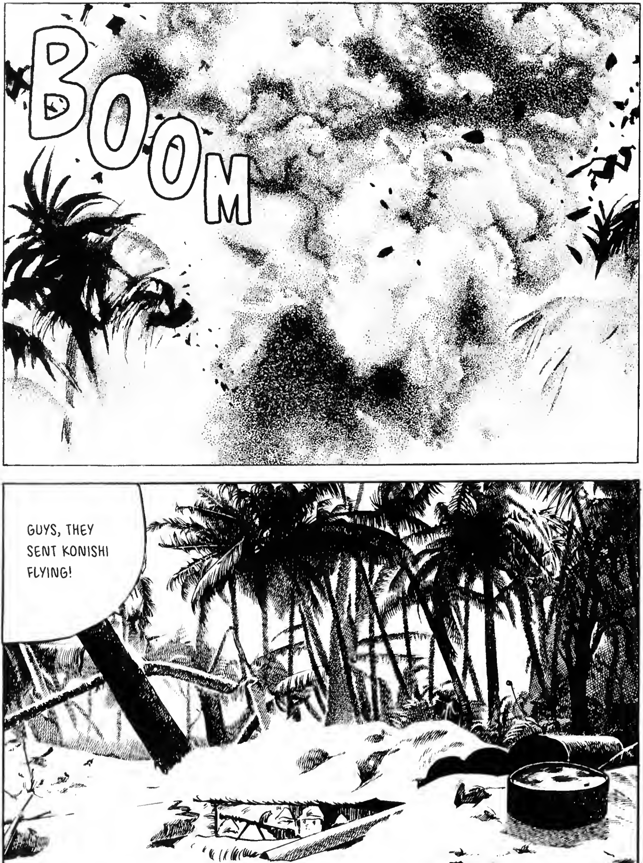

LANDING BEGINS!
WHOOSH

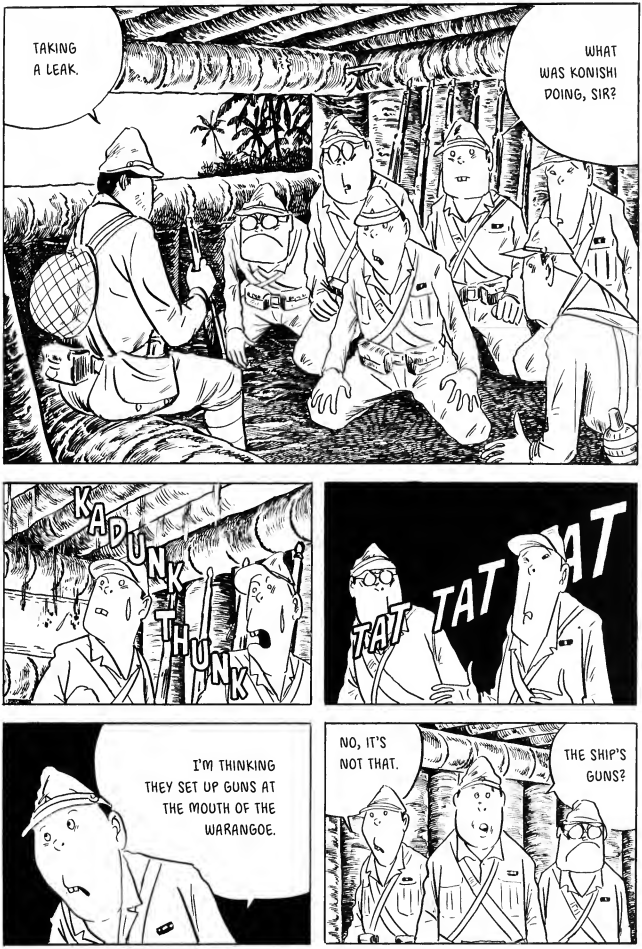

TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT

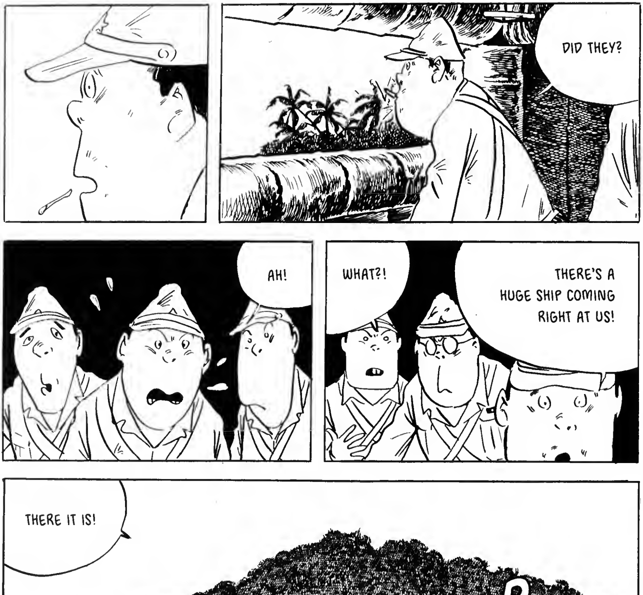

BLAM

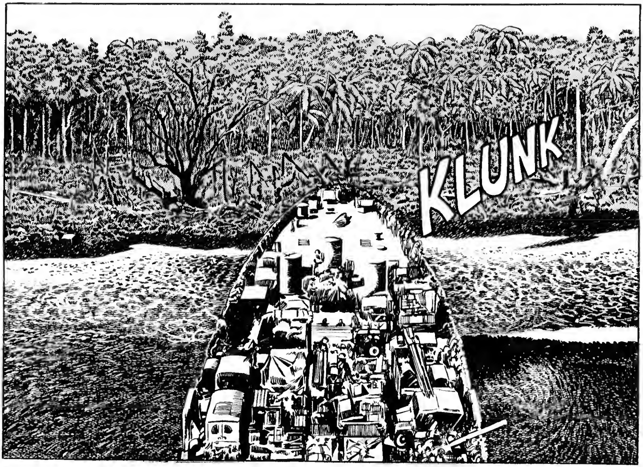

TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT

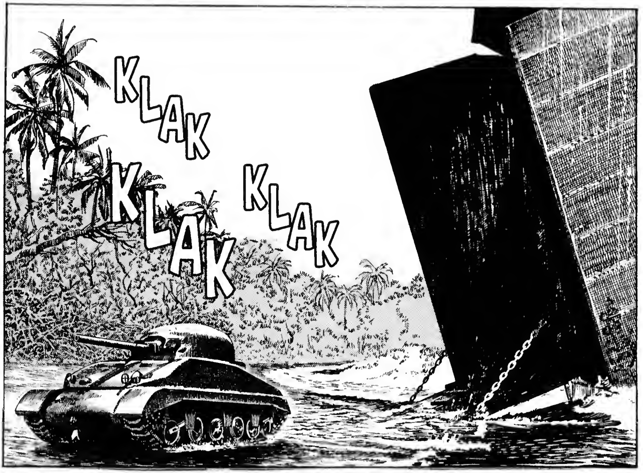


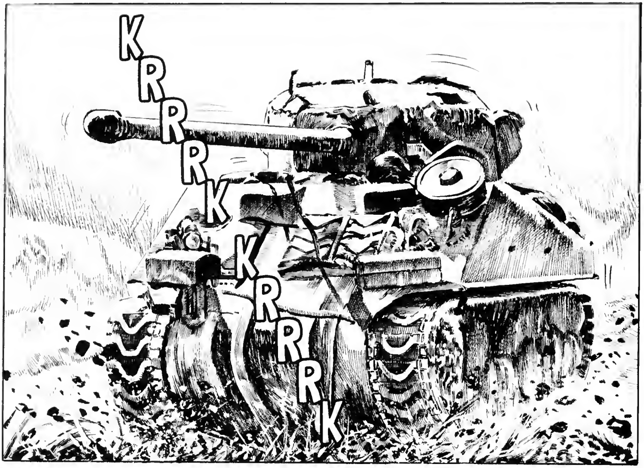

BOOM
GUYS, THEY SENT KONISHI FLYING!

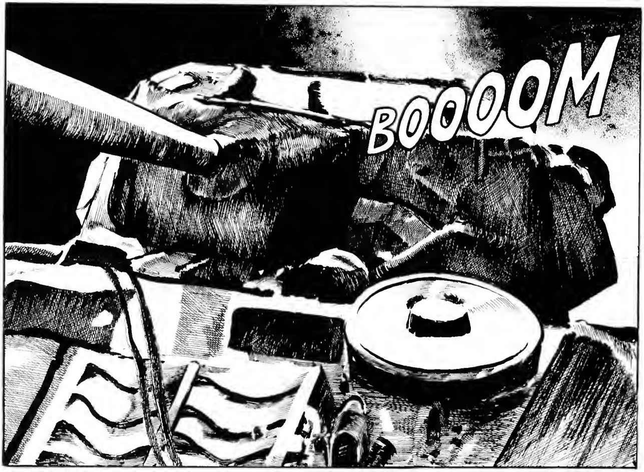

WHAT WAS KONISHI DOING, SIR?
TAKING A LEAK.
TAT TAT TAT
KADUNK THUNK
THE SHIP'S GUNS?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT.
I'M THINKING THEY SET UP GUNS AT THE MOUTH OF THE WARANGOE.


DID THEY?
AH!
WHAT?!
THERE'S A HUGE SHIP COMING RIGHT AT US!
THERE IT IS!
KRRR
KRRR

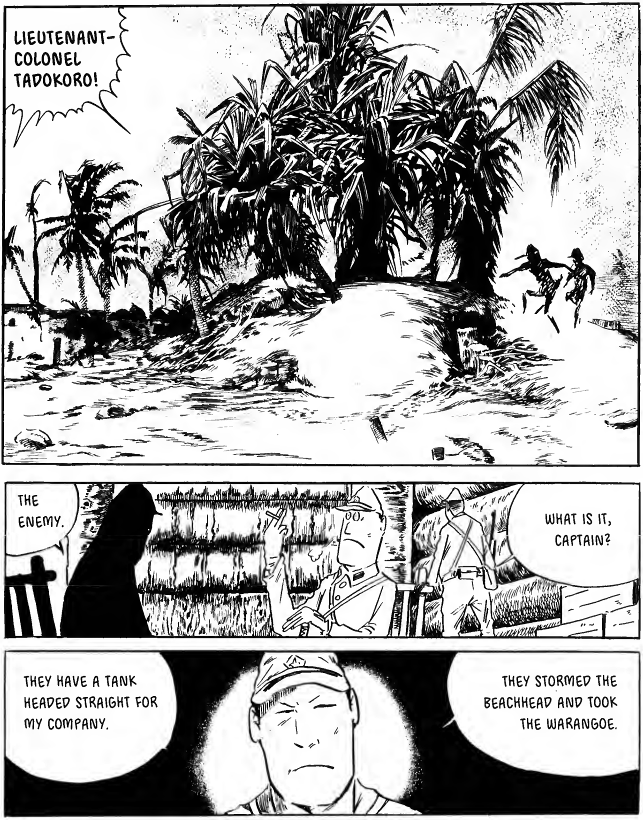

KLUNK

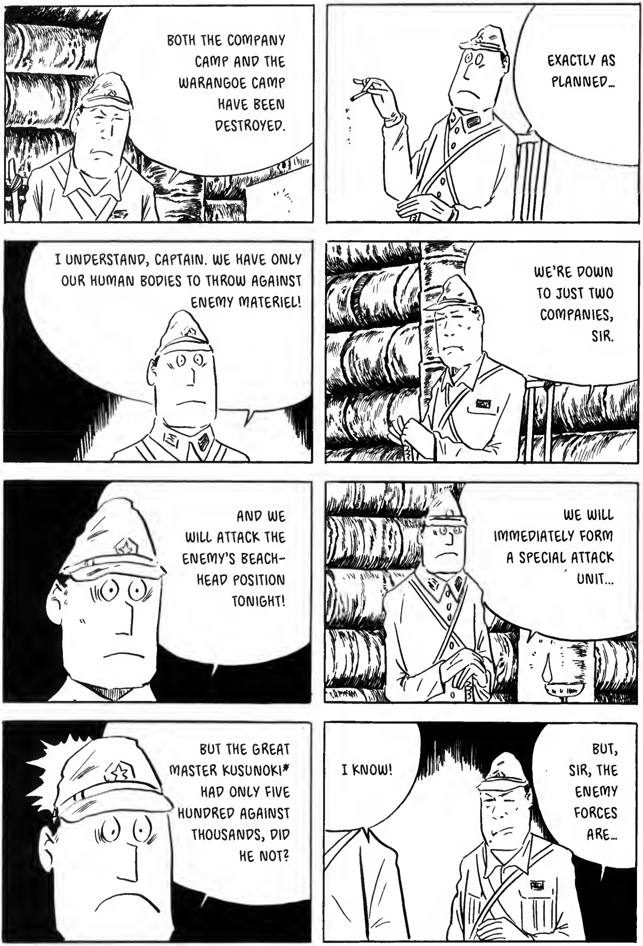

KLAK
KLAK
KLAK


KRRRRK
KRRRRK

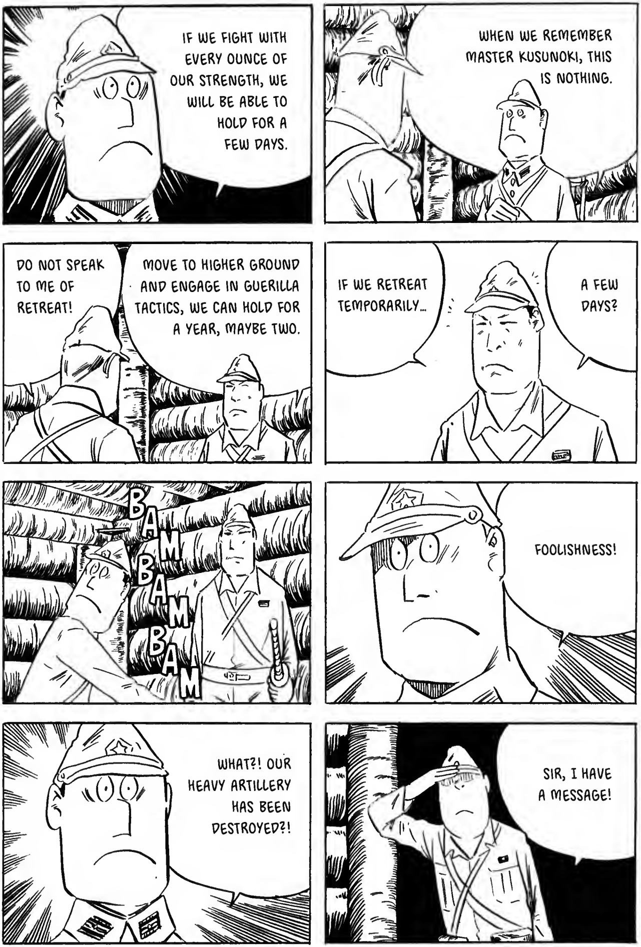

BOOOOM

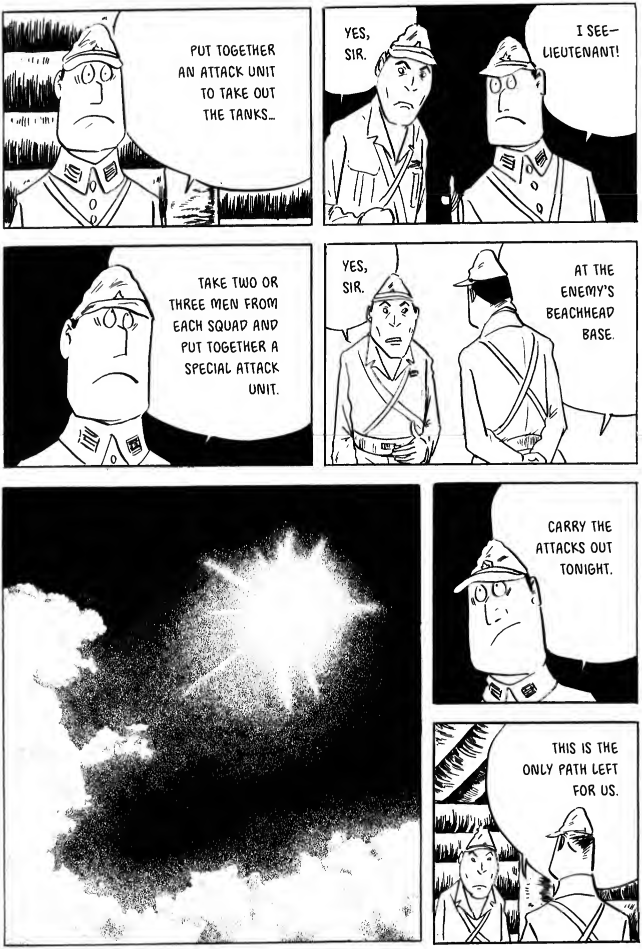
SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT

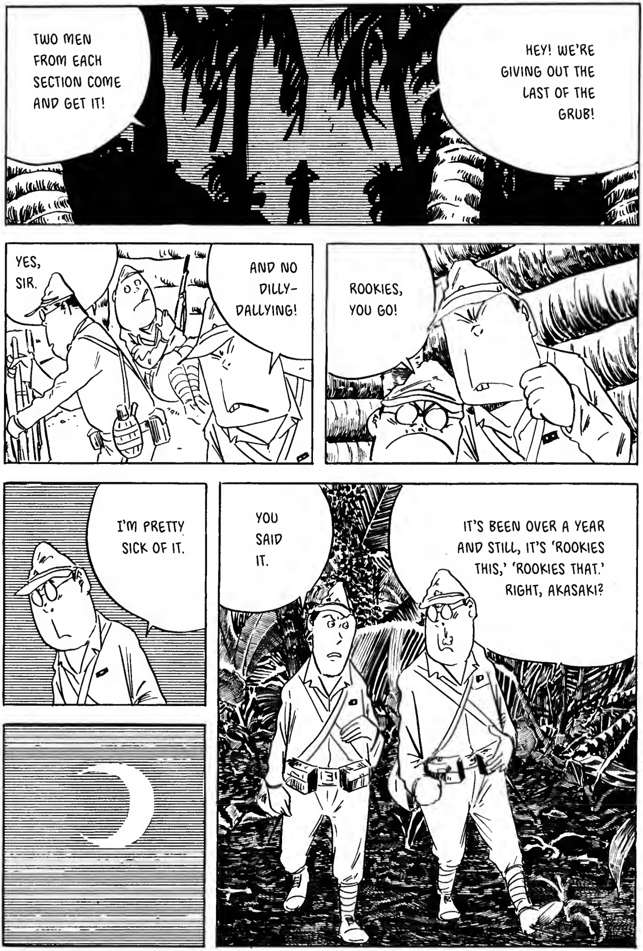

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL TADOKORO!
WHAT IS IT, CAPTAIN?
THE ENEMY.
THEY STORMED THE BEACHHEAD AND TOOK THE WARANGOE.
THEY HAVE A TANK HEADED STRAIGHT FOR MY COMPANY.

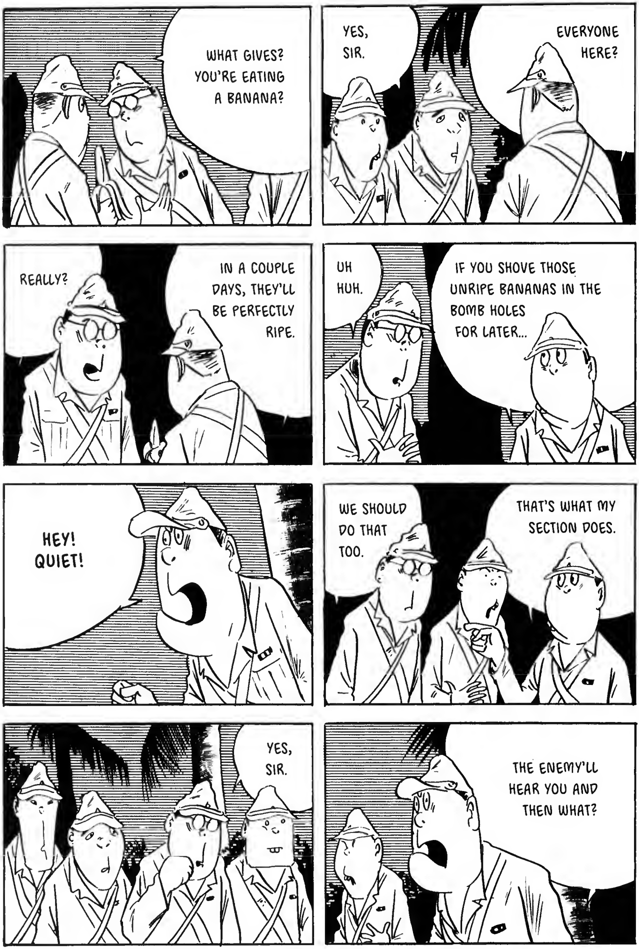

BOTH THE COMPANY CAMP AND THE WARANGOE CAMP HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.
EXACTLY AS PLANNED...
I UNDERSTAND, CAPTAIN. WE HAVE ONLY OUR HUMAN BODIES TO THROW AGAINST ENEMY MATERIEL!
WE'RE DOWN TO JUST TWO COMPANIES, SIR.
AND WE WILL ATTACK THE ENEMY'S BEACHHEAD POSITION TONIGHT!
WE WILL IMMEDIATELY FORM A SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT...
BUT THE GREAT MASTER KUSUNOKI* HAD ONLY FIVE HUNDRED AGAINST THOUSANDS, DID HE NOT?
BUT, SIR, THE ENEMY FORCES ARE...
I KNOW!

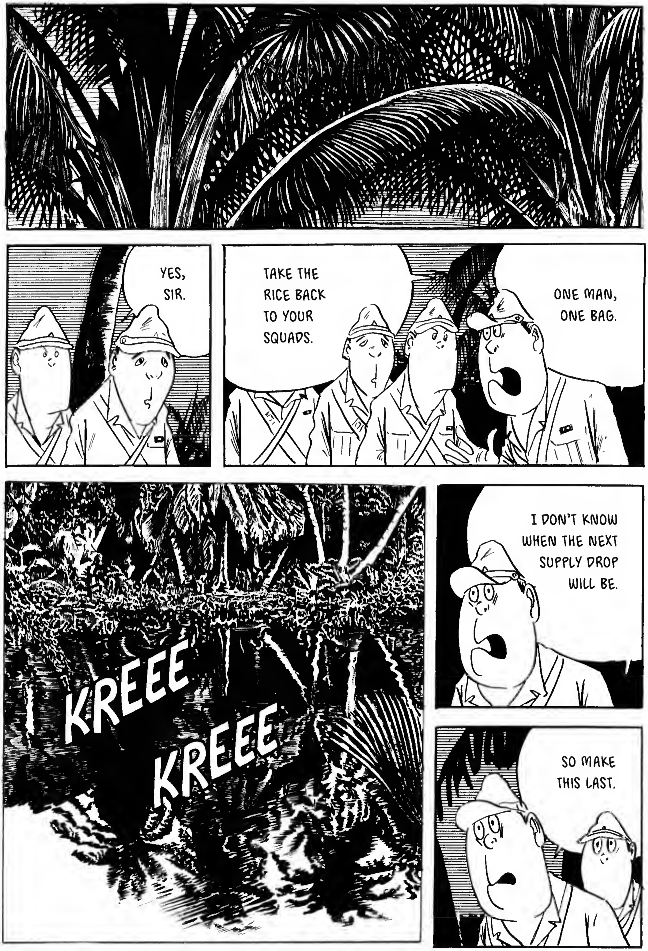
*SEE NOTES FOR PAGE 29 IN NOTES SECTION PAGE 366.

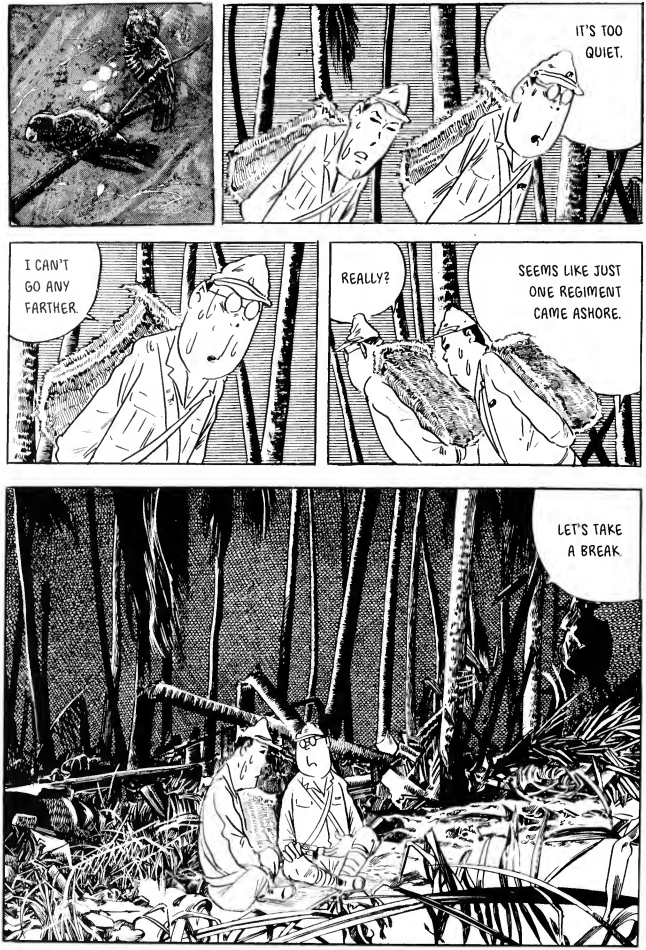

WHEN WE REMEMBER MASTER KUSUNOKI, THIS IS NOTHING.
IF WE FIGHT WITH EVERY OUNCE OF OUR STRENGTH, WE WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD FOR A FEW DAYS.
A FEW DAYS?
IF WE RETREAT TEMPORARILY...
MOVE TO HIGHER GROUND AND ENGAGE IN GUERILLA TACTICS, WE CAN HOLD FOR A YEAR, MAYBE TWO.
DO NOT SPEAK TO ME OF RETREAT!
FOOLISHNESS!
BAM BAM BAM
SIR, I HAVE A MESSAGE!
WHAT?! OUR HEAVY ARTILLERY HAS BEEN DESTROYED?!

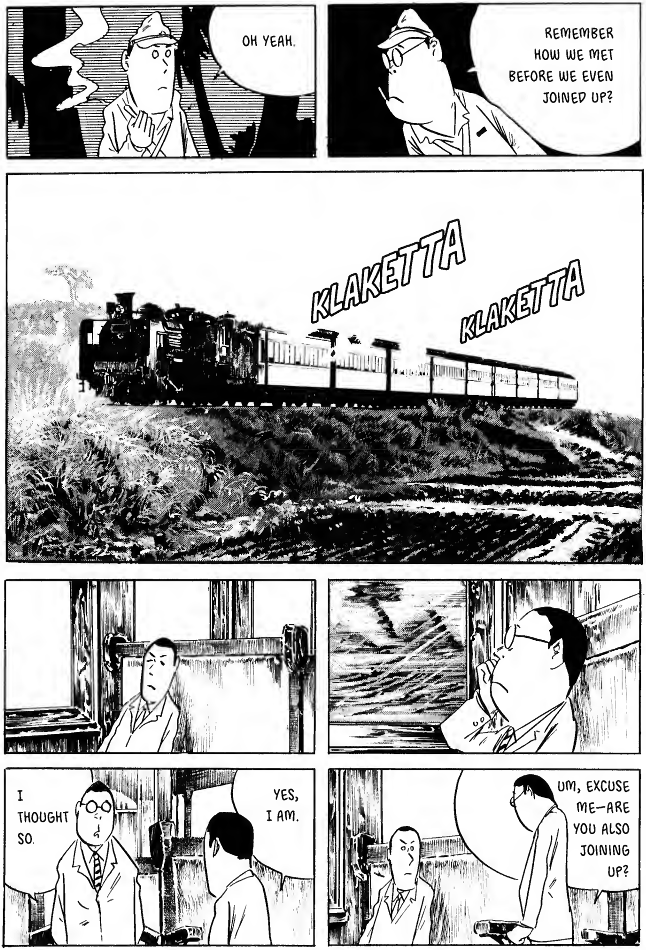

PUT TOGETHER AN ATTACK UNIT TO TAKE OUT THE TANKS...
I SEE— LIEUTENANT!
YES, SIR.
TAKE TWO OR THREE MEN FROM EACH SQUAD AND PUT TOGETHER A SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT.
YES, SIR.
AT THE ENEMY'S BEACHHEAD BASE.
CARRY THE ATTACKS OUT TONIGHT.
THIS IS THE ONLY PATH LEFT FOR US.

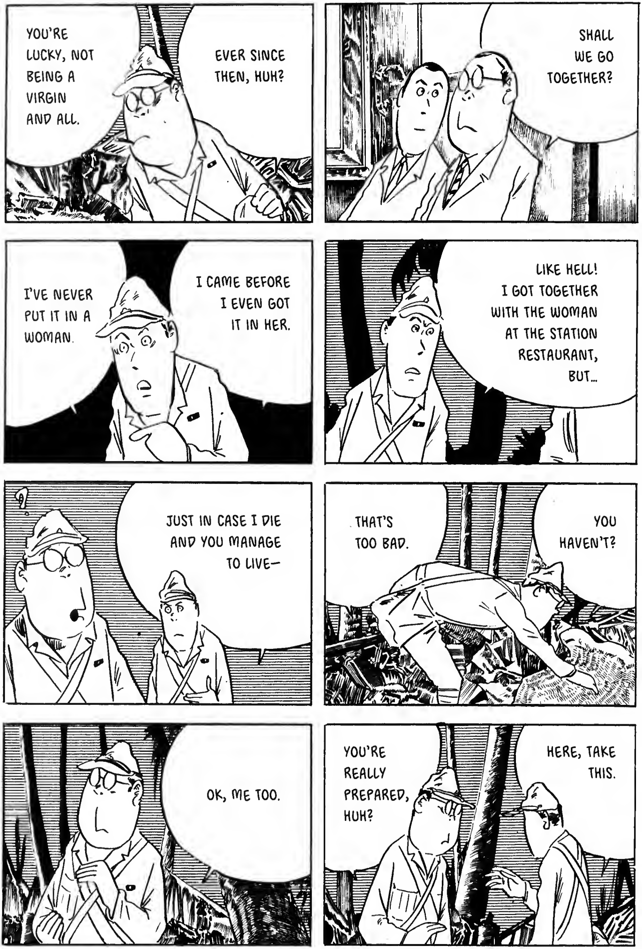

HEY! WE'RE GIVING OUT THE LAST OF THE GRUB!
TWO MEN FROM EACH SECTION COME AND GET IT!
ROOKIES, YOU GO!
AND NO DILLY-DALLYING!
YES, SIR.
IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR AND STILL, IT'S 'ROOKIES THIS,' 'ROOKIES THAT.' RIGHT, AKASAKI?
YOU SAID IT.
I'M PRETTY SICK OF IT.

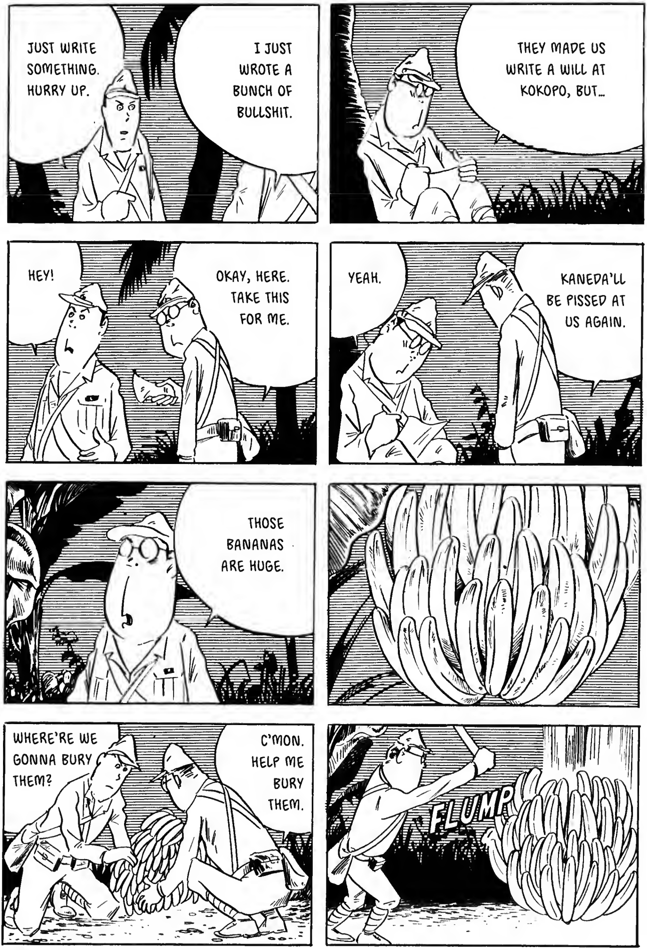

EVERYONE HERE?
YES, SIR.
WHAT GIVES? YOU'RE EATING A BANANA?
IF YOU SHOVE THOSE UNRIPE BANANAS IN THE BOMB HOLES FOR LATER...
UH HUH.
IN A COUPLE DAYS, THEY'LL BE PERFECTLY RIPE.
REALLY?
THAT'S WHAT MY SECTION DOES.
WE SHOULD DO THAT TOO.
HEY! QUIET!
THE ENEMY'LL HEAR YOU AND THEN WHAT?
YES, SIR.

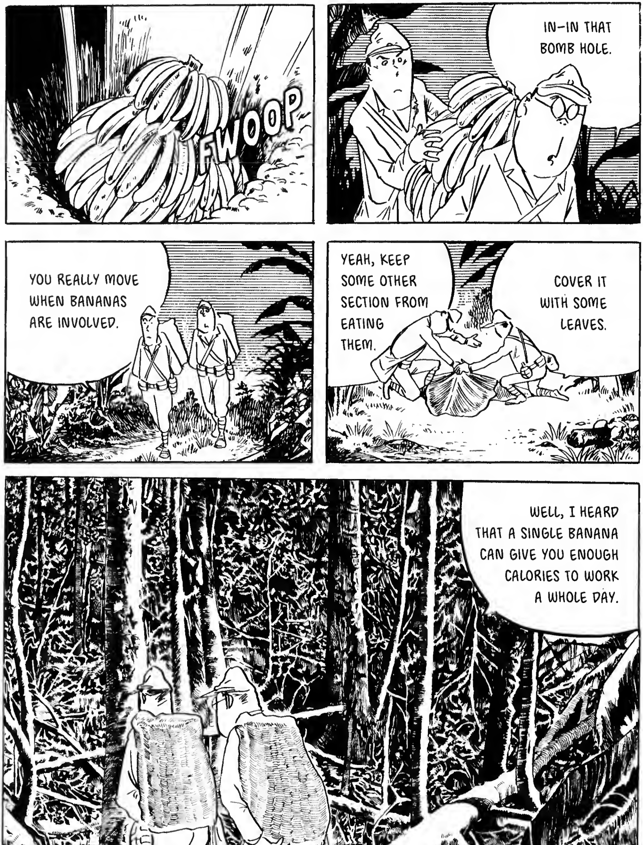

YES, SIR.
TAKE THE RICE BACK TO YOUR SQUADS.
ONE MAN, ONE BAG.
KREEE KREEE
I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE NEXT SUPPLY DROP WILL BE.
SO MAKE THIS LAST.

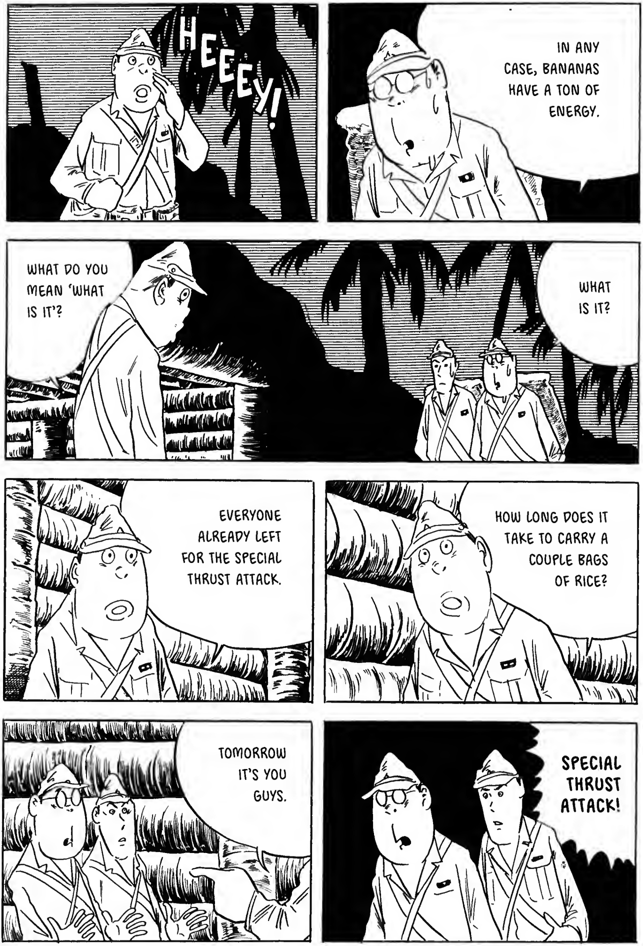

IT'S TOO QUIET.
I CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER.
REALLY?
SEEMS LIKE JUST ONE REGIMENT CAME ASHORE.
LET'S TAKE A BREAK.


REMEMBER HOW WE MET BEFORE WE EVEN JOINED UP?
OH YEAH.
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
UM, EXCUSE ME—ARE YOU ALSO JOINING UP?
YES, I AM.
I THOUGHT SO.

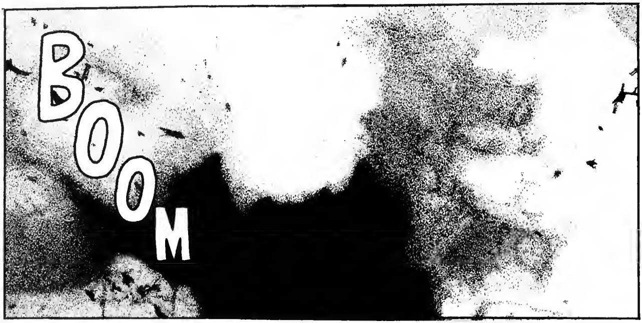

SHALL WE GO TOGETHER?
EVER SINCE THEN, HUH?
YOU'RE LUCKY, NOT BEING A VIRGIN AND ALL.
LIKE HELL! I GOT TOGETHER WITH THE WOMAN AT THE STATION RESTAURANT, BUT...
I CAME BEFORE I EVEN GOT IT IN HER.
I'VE NEVER PUT IT IN A WOMAN.
YOU HAVEN'T?
THAT'S TOO BAD.
JUST IN CASE I DIE AND YOU MANAGE TO LIVE—
HERE, TAKE THIS.
YOU'RE REALLY PREPARED, HUH?
OK, ME TOO.

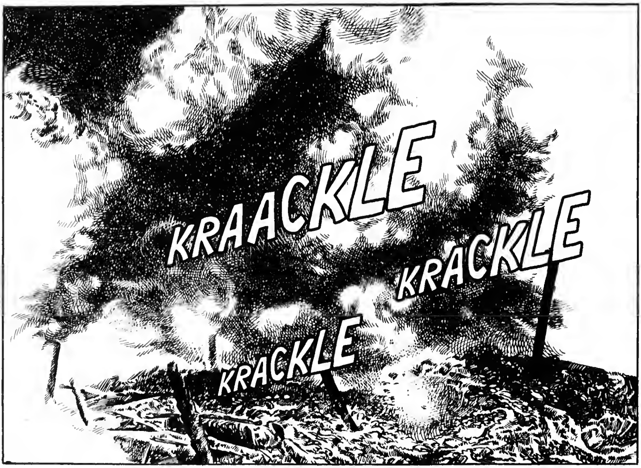

JUST WRITE SOMETHING. HURRY UP.
I JUST WROTE A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT.
THEY MADE US WRITE A WILL AT KOKOPO, BUT...
HEY!
OKAY, HERE. TAKE THIS FOR ME.
YEAH.
KANEDA'LL BE PISSED AT US AGAIN.
THOSE BANANAS ARE HUGE.
WHERE'RE WE GONNA BURY THEM?
C'MON. HELP ME BURY THEM.
FLUMP

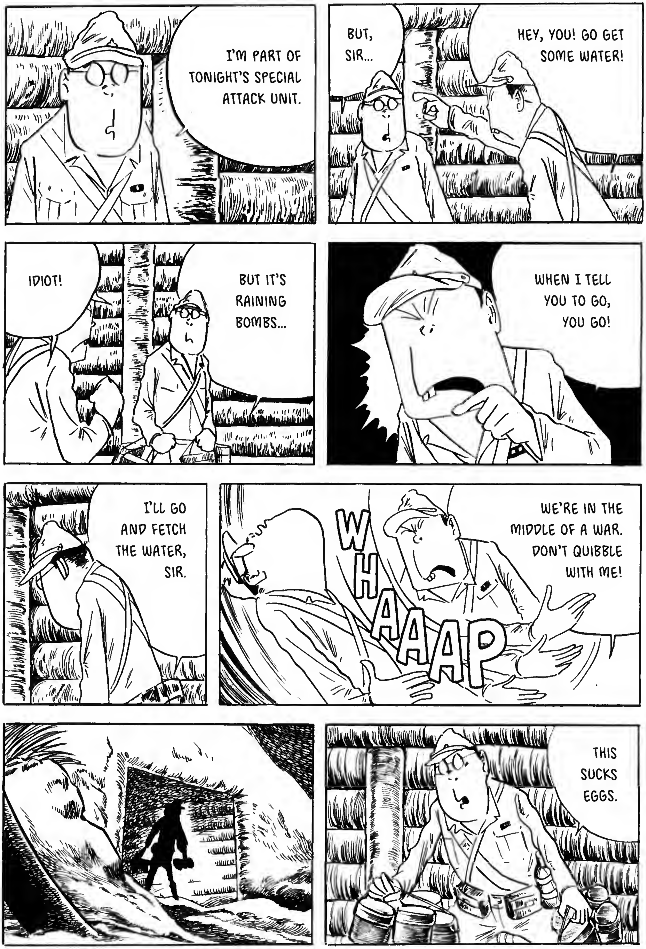

FWOOP
IN—IN THAT BOMB HOLE.
YOU REALLY MOVE WHEN BANANAS ARE INVOLVED.
COVER IT WITH SOME LEAVES.
YEAH, KEEP SOME OTHER SECTION FROM EATING THEM.
WELL, I HEARD THAT A SINGLE BANANA CAN GIVE YOU ENOUGH CALORIES TO WORK A WHOLE DAY.

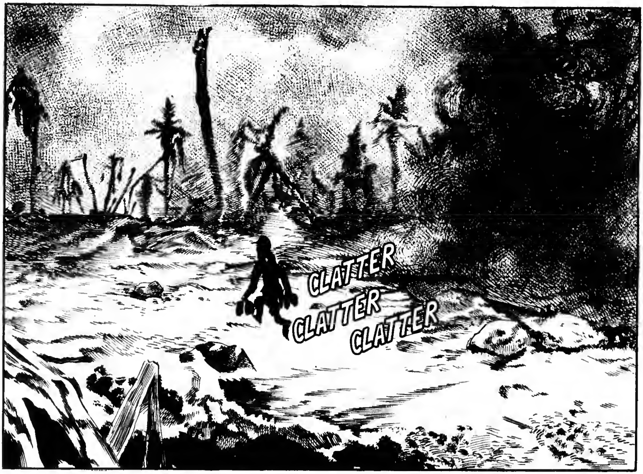

HEEEY!
IN ANY CASE, BANANAS HAVE A TON OF ENERGY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'WHAT IS IT'?
WHAT IS IT?
EVERYONE ALREADY LEFT FOR THE SPECIAL THRUST ATTACK.
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO CARRY A COUPLE BAGS OF RICE?
TOMORROW IT'S YOU GUYS.
SPECIAL THRUST ATTACK!

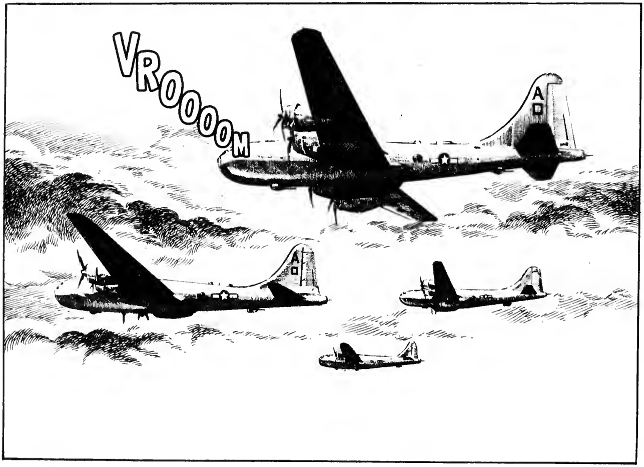
HQ'S NEAR DESTRUCTION

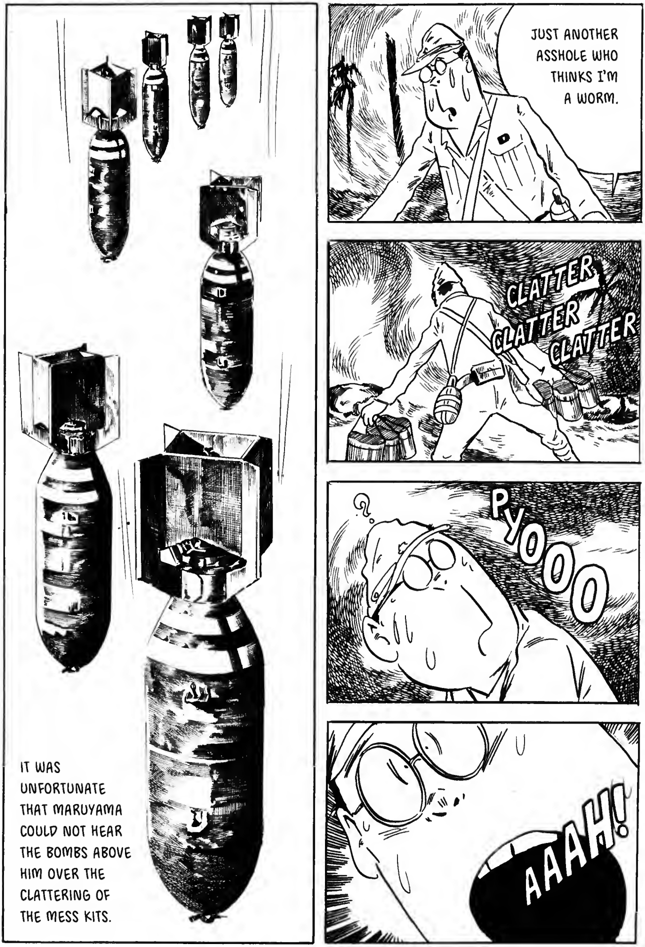


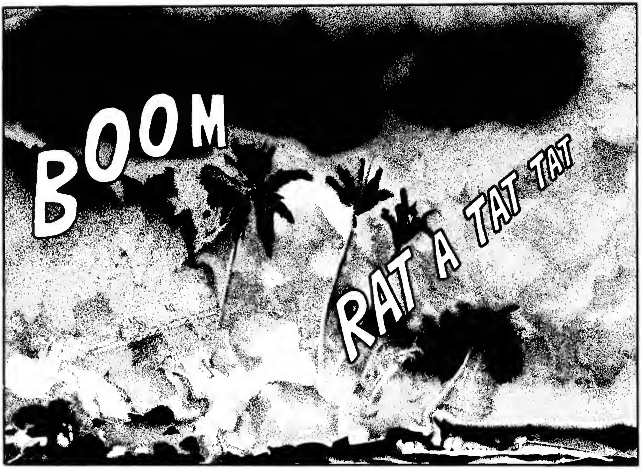

KRAACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE

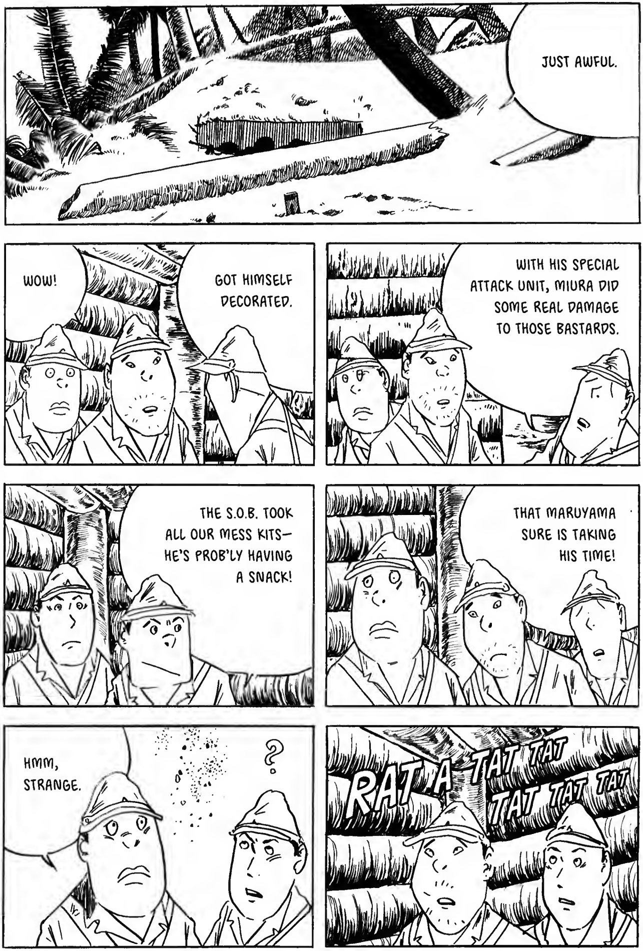

I'M PART OF TONIGHT'S SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT.
BUT, SIR...
HEY, YOU! GO GET SOME WATER!
IDIOT!
BUT IT'S RAINING BOMBS...
WHEN I TELL YOU TO GO, YOU GO!
I'LL GO AND FETCH THE WATER, SIR.
WHAAAP
WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR. DON'T QUIBBLE WITH ME!
THIS SUCKS EGGS.

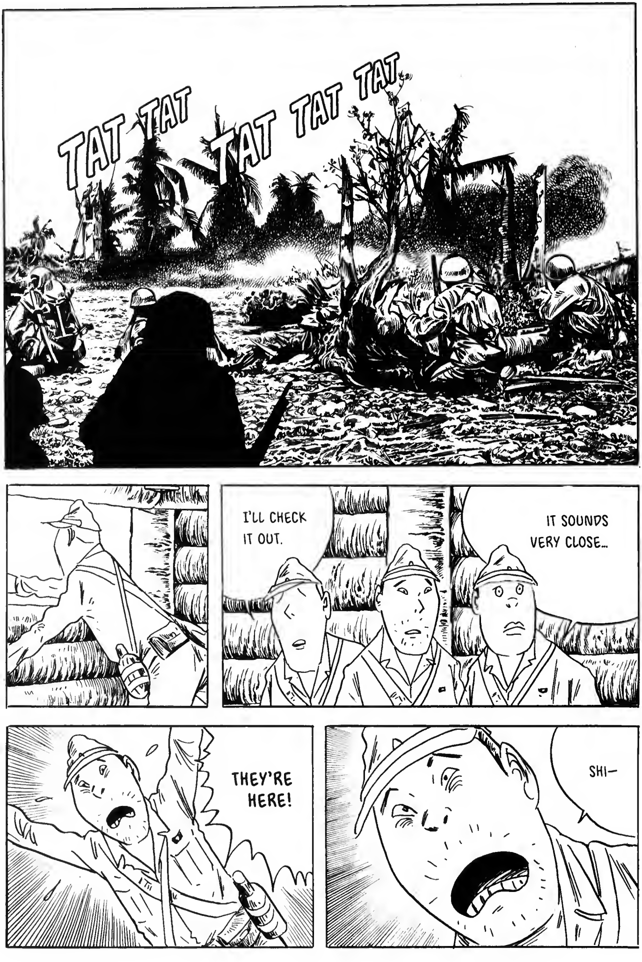

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER

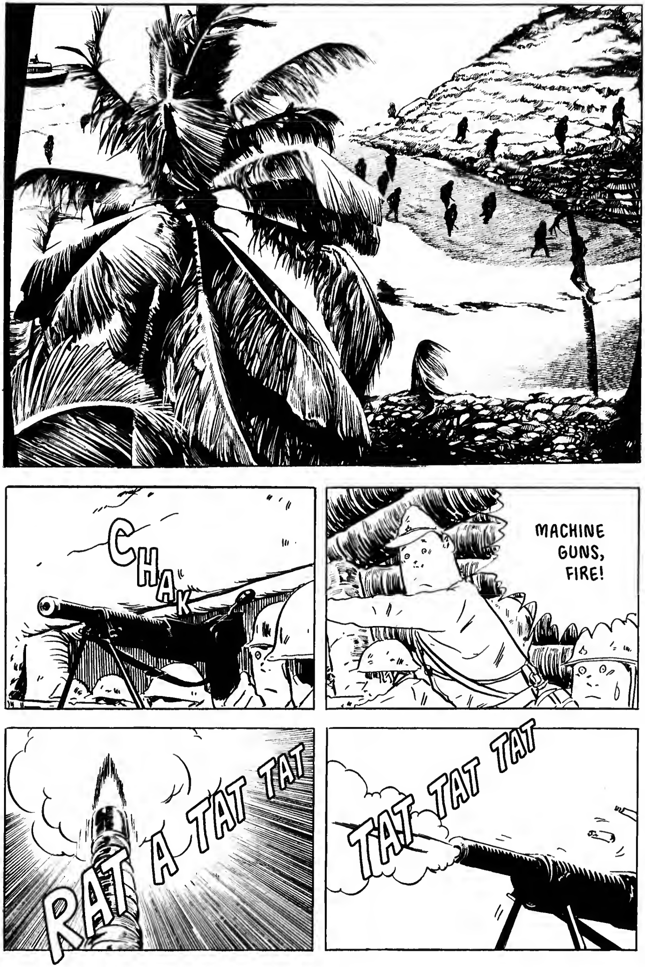

VROOOOOM
A
A

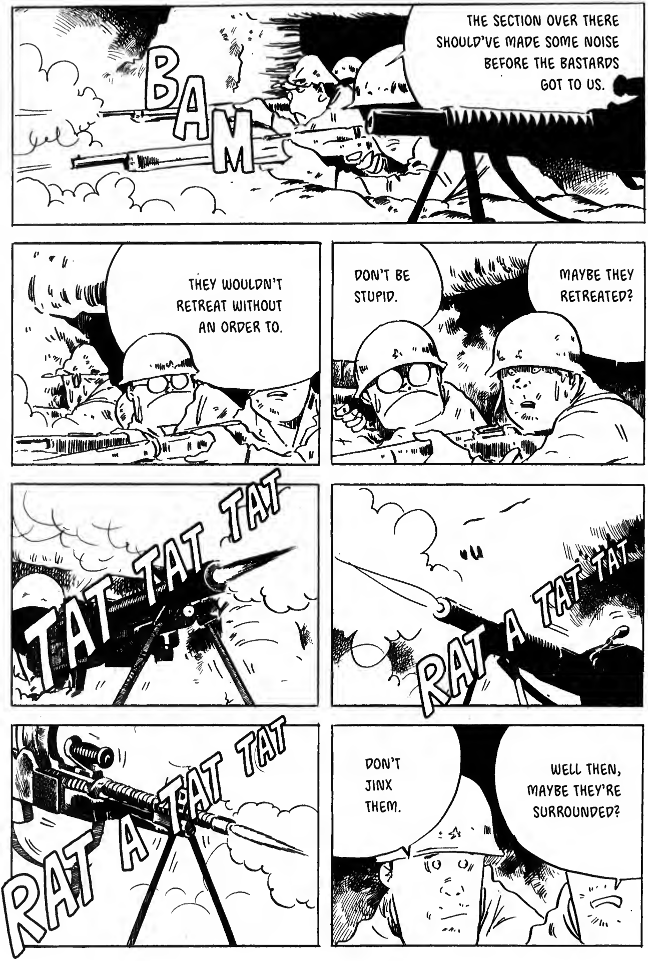

IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT MARUYAMA COULD NOT HEAR THE BOMBS ABOVE HIM OVER THE CLATTERING OF THE MESS KITS.
JUST ANOTHER ASSHOLE WHO THINKS I'M A WORM.
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
?
PYOOOO
AAAH!

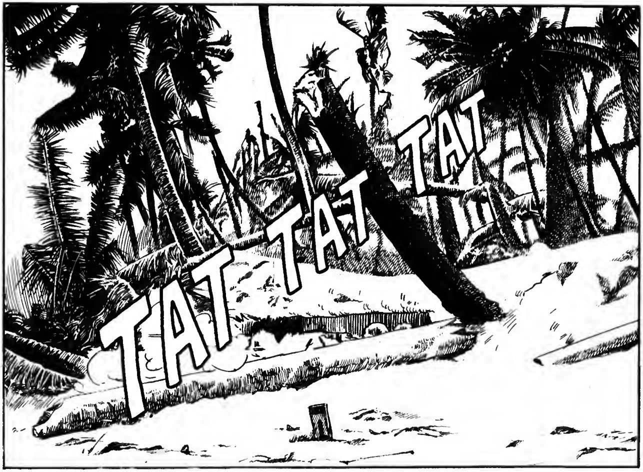

BOOM
RAT A TAT TAT

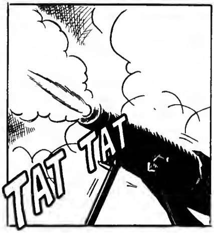

JUST AWFUL.
WOW!
GOT HIMSELF DECORATED.
WITH HIS SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT, MIURA DID SOME REAL DAMAGE TO THOSE BASTARDS.
THE S.O.B. TOOK ALL OUR MESS KITS— HE'S PROB'LY HAVING A SNACK!
THAT MARUYAMA SURE IS TAKING HIS TIME!
HMM, STRANGE.
?
RAT A TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT

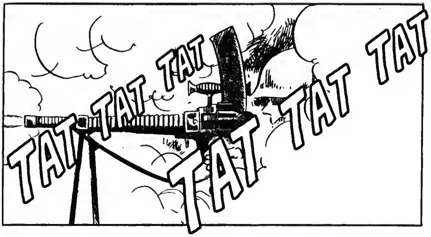

TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT
I'LL CHECK IT OUT.
IT SOUNDS VERY CLOSE...
THEY'RE HERE!
SHI–

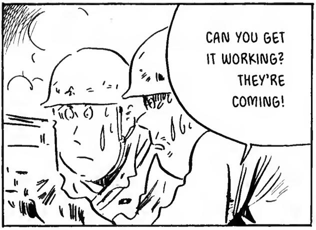

CHAK
MACHINE GUNS, FIRE!
RAT A TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT

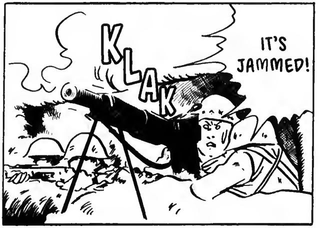

BAM
THE SECTION OVER THERE SHOULD'VE MADE SOME NOISE BEFORE THE BASTARDS GOT TO US.
MAYBE THEY RETREATED?
DON'T BE STUPID.
THEY WOULDN'T RETREAT WITHOUT AN ORDER TO.
RAT A TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT
WELL THEN, MAYBE THEY'RE SURROUNDED?
DON'T JINX THEM.
RAT A TAT TAT

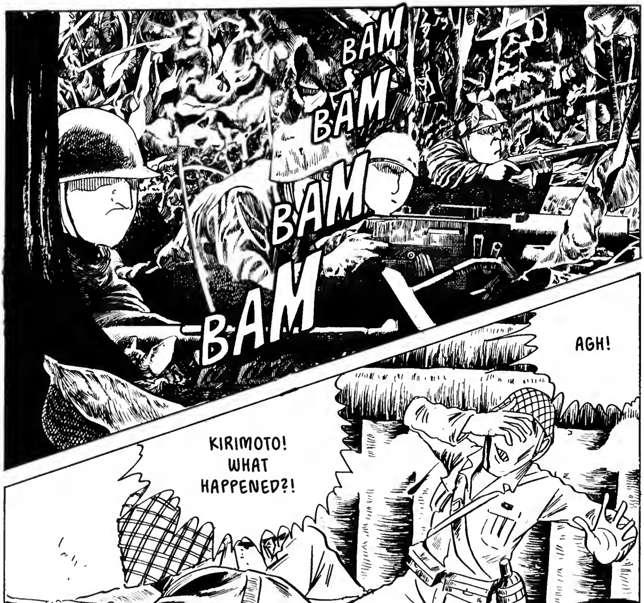

TAT TAT TAT

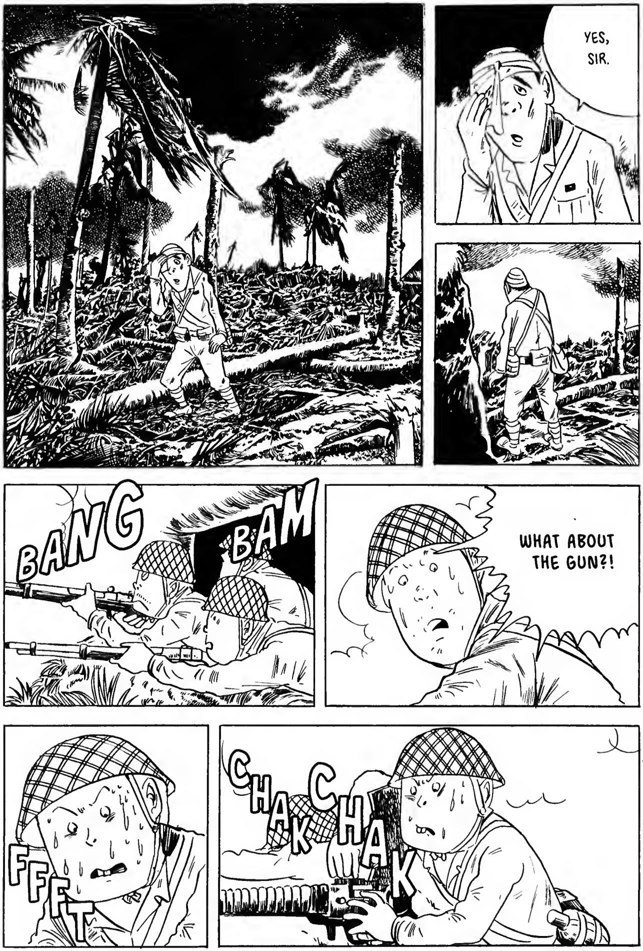

TAT TAT

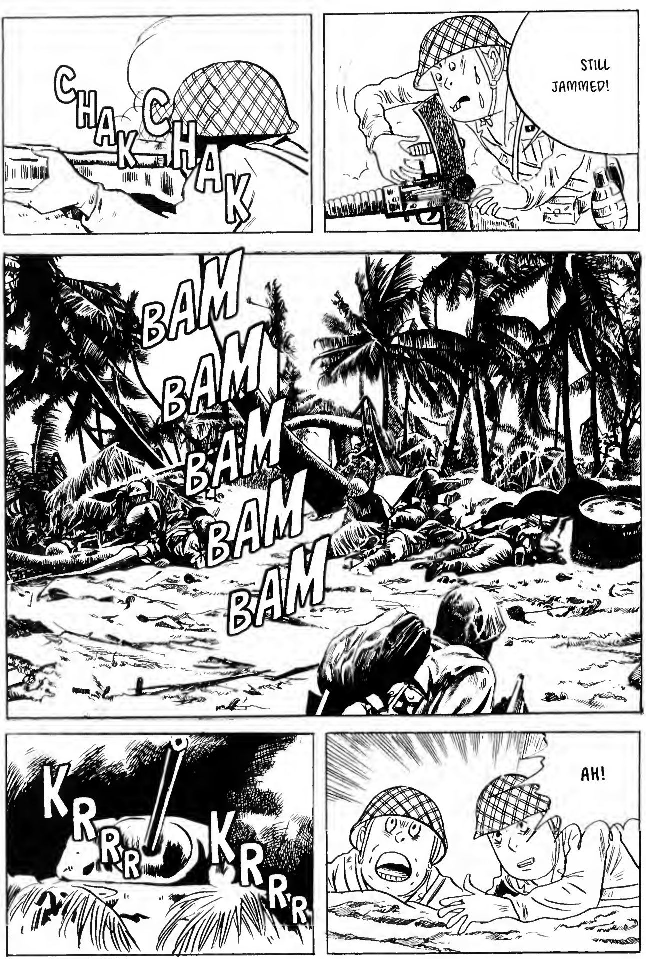

TAT TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT

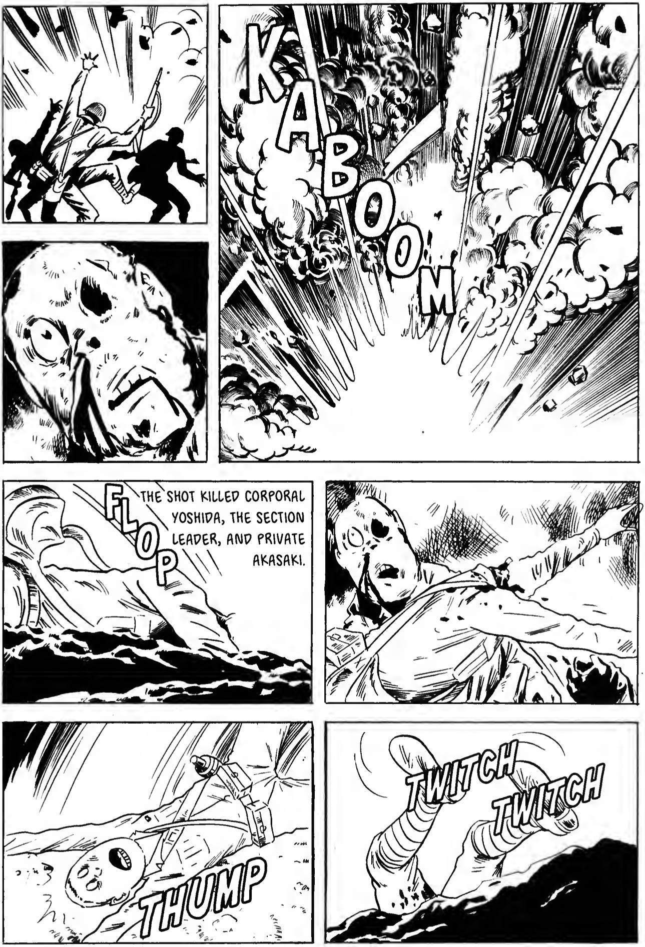

CAN YOU GET IT WORKING? THEY'RE COMING!

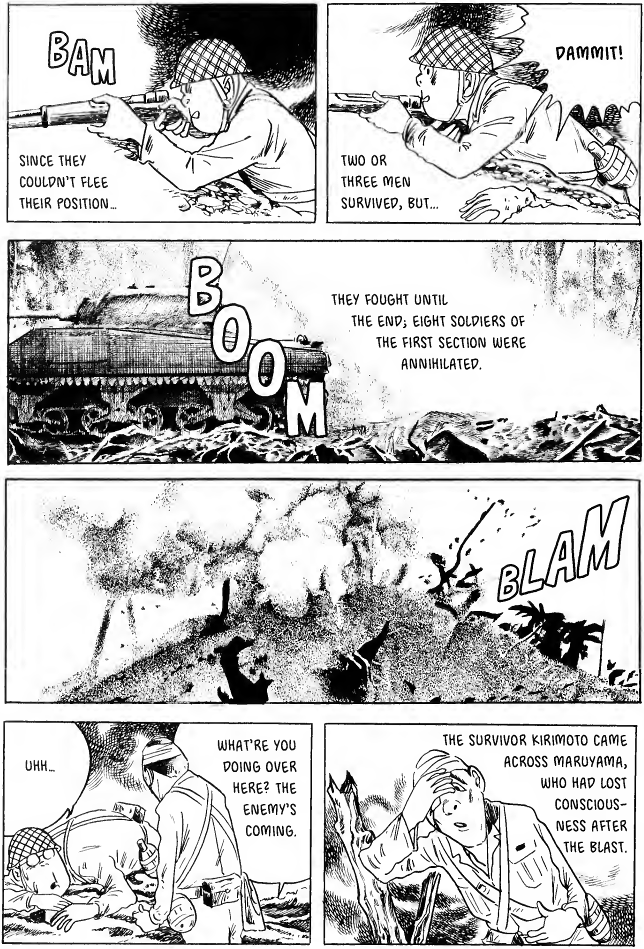

KLAK
IT'S JAMMED!

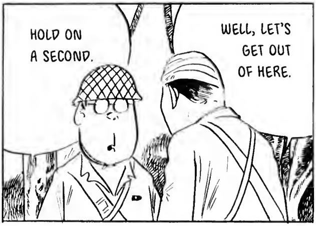

BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
AGH!
KIRIMOTO! WHAT HAPPENED?!
THEY GOT ME IN THE EYE!
GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

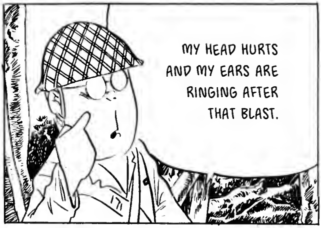

YES, SIR.
BANG
BAM
WHAT ABOUT THE GUN?!
FFFFT
CHAK
CHAK

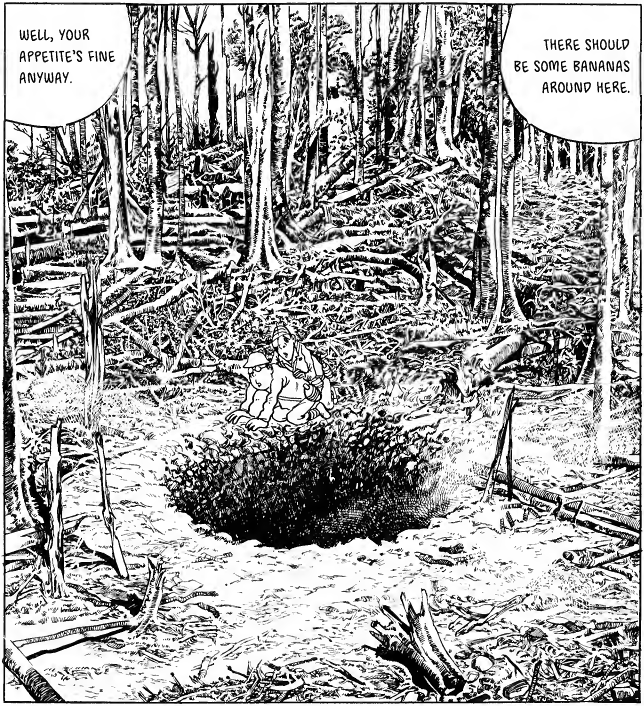

CHAK CHAK
STILL JAMMED!
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM
KRRR KRRR
AH!

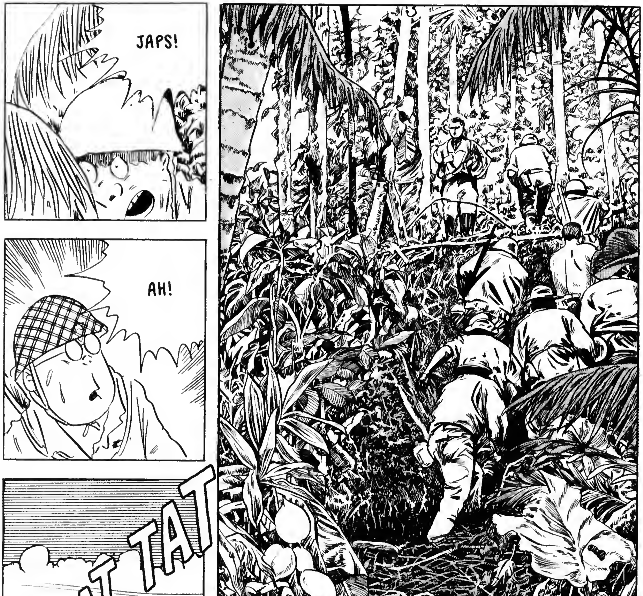

KABOOM
FLOP
THE SHOT KILLED CORPORAL YOSHIDA, THE SECTION LEADER, AND PRIVATE AKASAKI.
THUMP
TWITCH
TWITCH

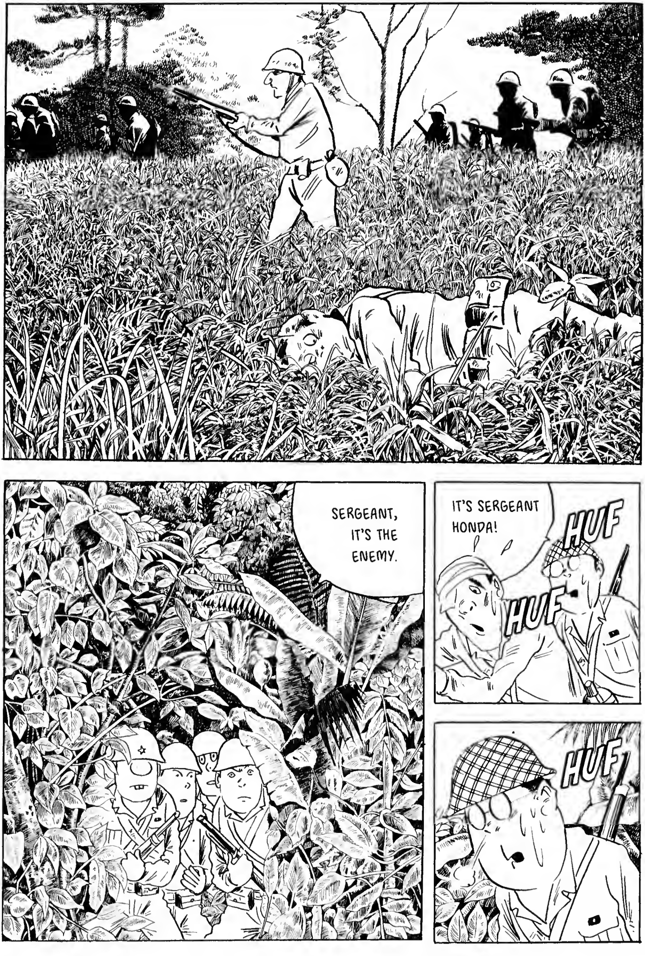

BAM
SINCE THEY COULDN'T FLEE THEIR POSITION...
DAMMIT!
TWO OR THREE MEN SURVIVED, BUT...
BOOM
THEY FOUGHT UNTIL THE END; EIGHT SOLDIERS OF THE FIRST SECTION WERE ANNIHILATED.
BLAM
UHH...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING OVER HERE? THE ENEMY'S COMING.
THE SURVIVOR KIRIMOTO CAME ACROSS MARUYAMA, WHO HAD LOST CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER THE BLAST.

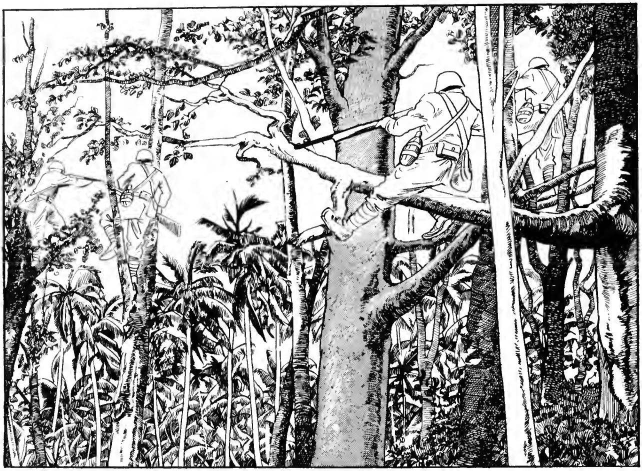

WELL, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
HOLD ON A SECOND.

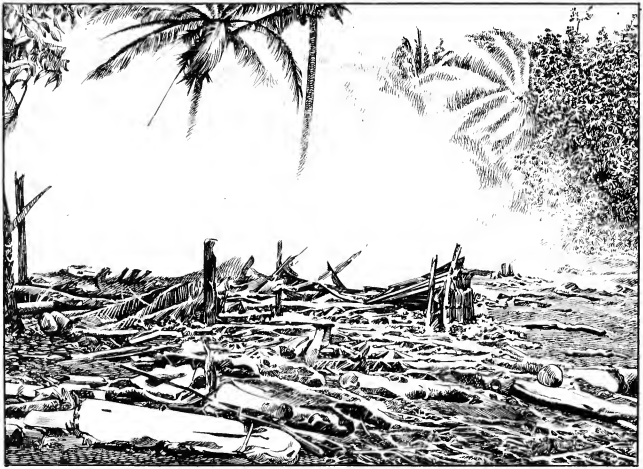

MY HEAD HURTS AND MY EARS ARE RINGING AFTER THAT BLAST.

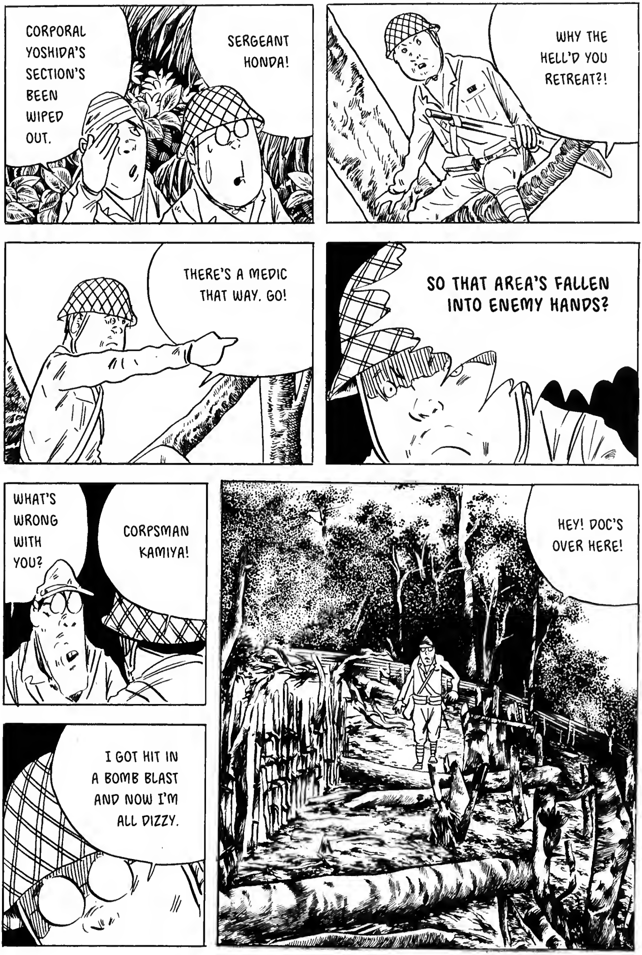

THERE SHOULD BE SOME BANANAS AROUND HERE.
WELL, YOUR APPETITE'S FINE ANYWAY.

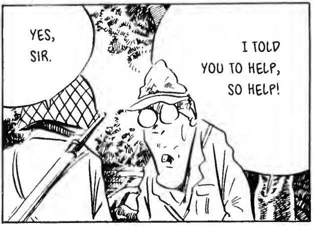

JAPS!
AH!
TAT TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT

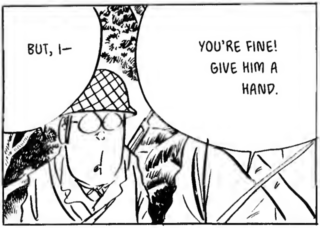

SERGEANT, IT'S THE ENEMY.
IT'S SERGEANT HONDA!
HUF
HUF
HUF

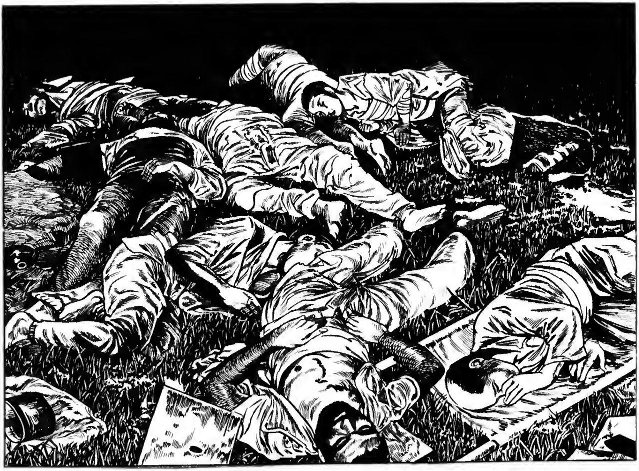


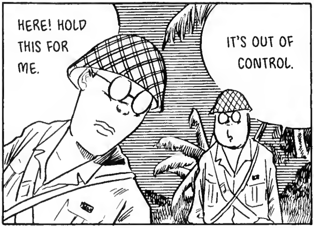


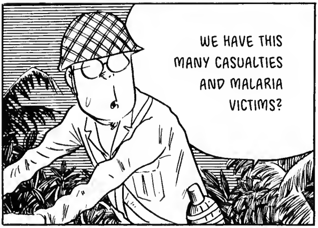

CORPORAL YOSHIDA'S SECTION'S BEEN WIPED OUT.
SERGEANT HONDA!
WHY THE HELL'D YOU RETREAT?!
THERE'S A MEDIC THAT WAY. GO!
SO THAT AREA'S FALLEN INTO ENEMY HANDS?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
CORPSMAN KAMIYA!
I GOT HIT IN A BOMB BLAST AND NOW I'M ALL DIZZY.
HEY! DOC'S OVER HERE!

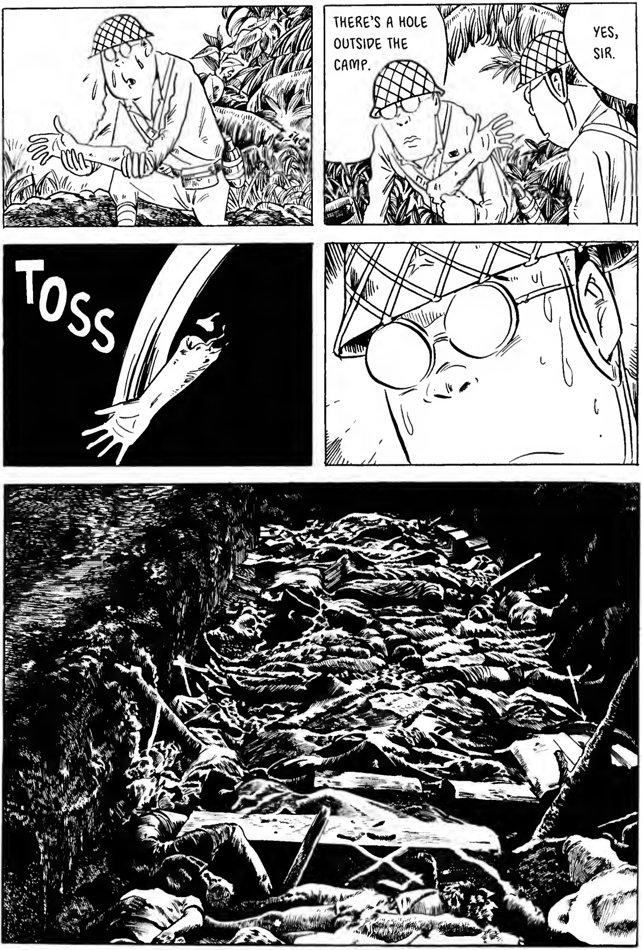

YES, SIR.
I TOLD YOU TO HELP, SO HELP!

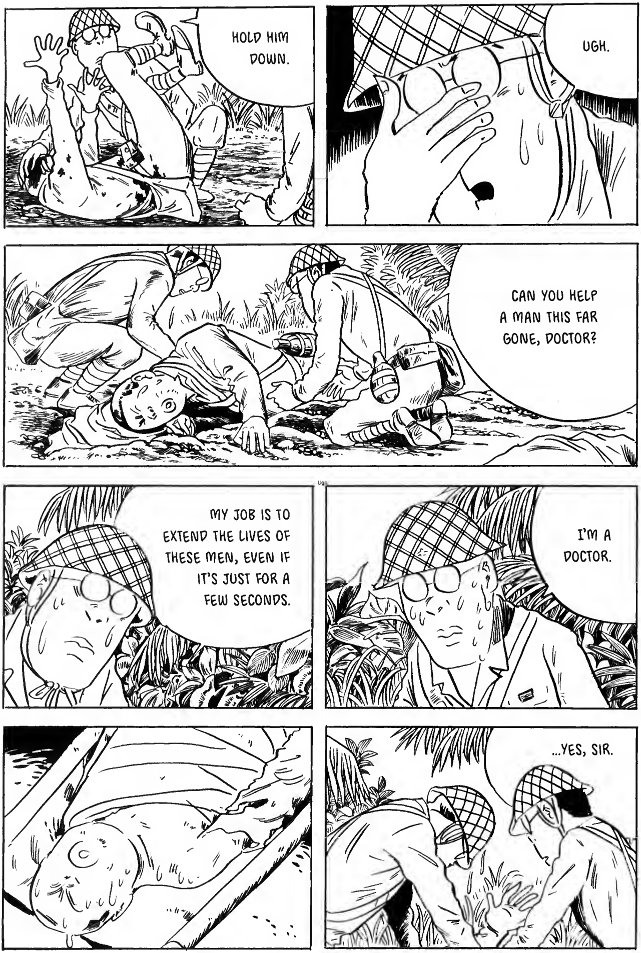

BUT, I—
YOU'RE FINE! GIVE HIM A HAND.

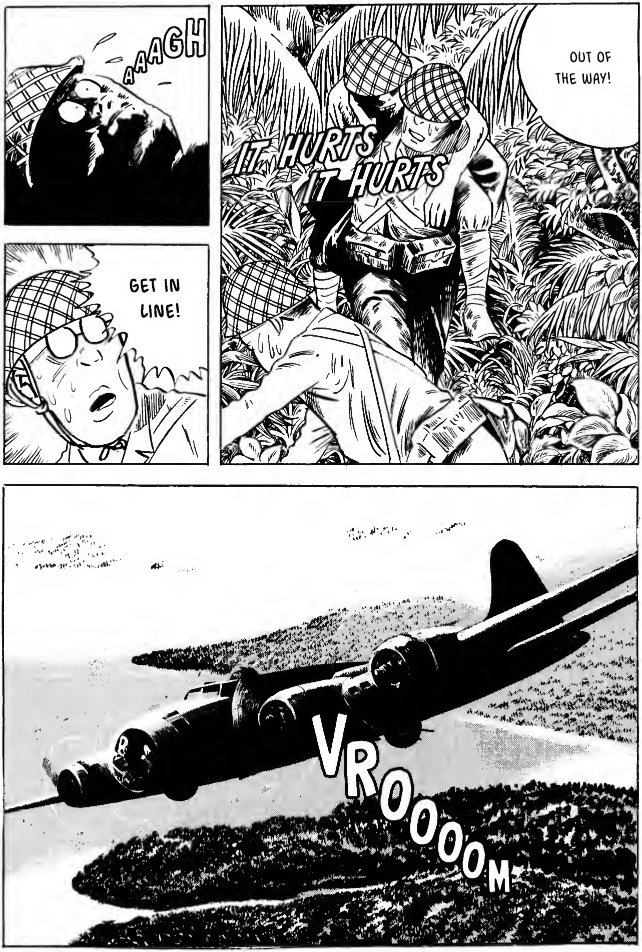


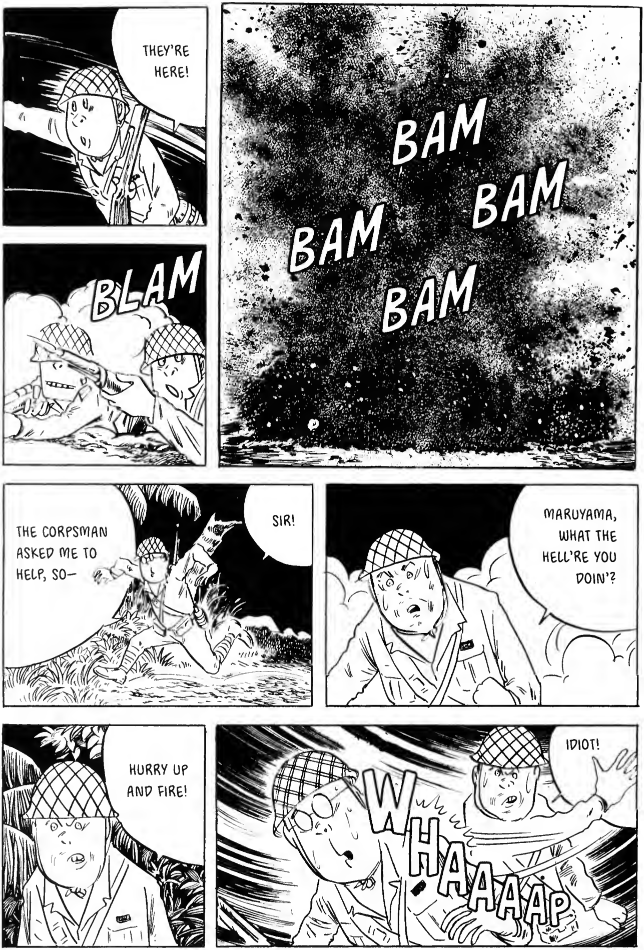

HERE! HOLD THIS FOR ME.
IT'S OUT OF CONTROL.

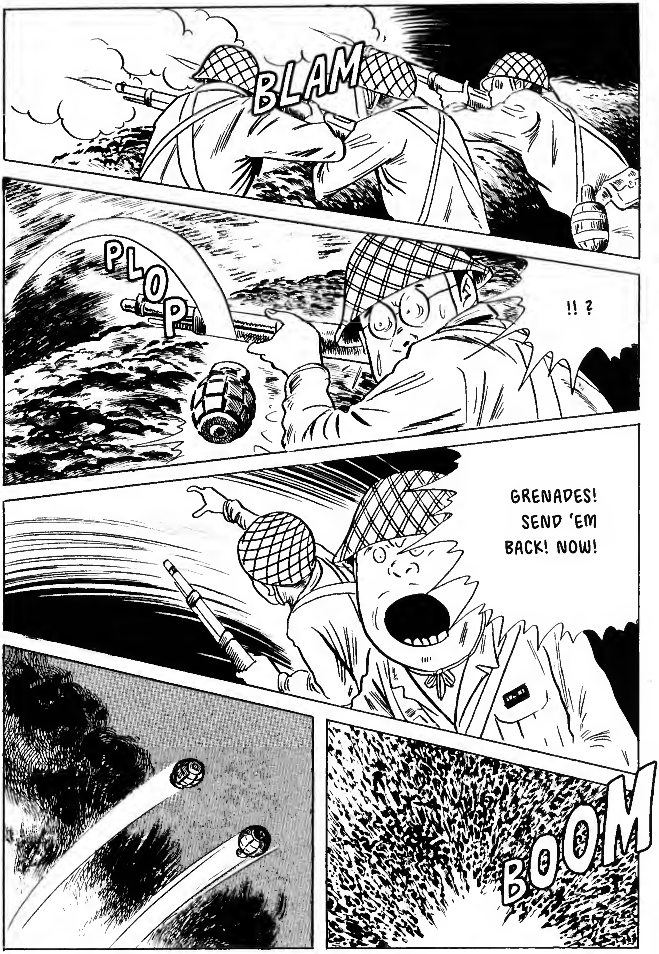

WE HAVE THIS MANY CASUALTIES AND MALARIA VICTIMS?

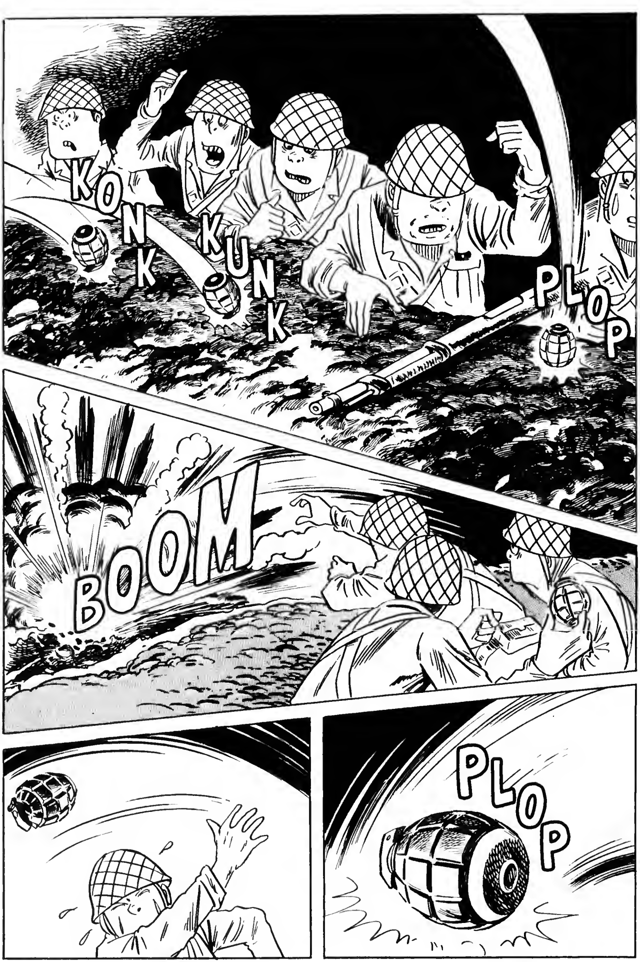

THERE'S A HOLE OUTSIDE THE CAMP.
YES, SIR.
TOSS

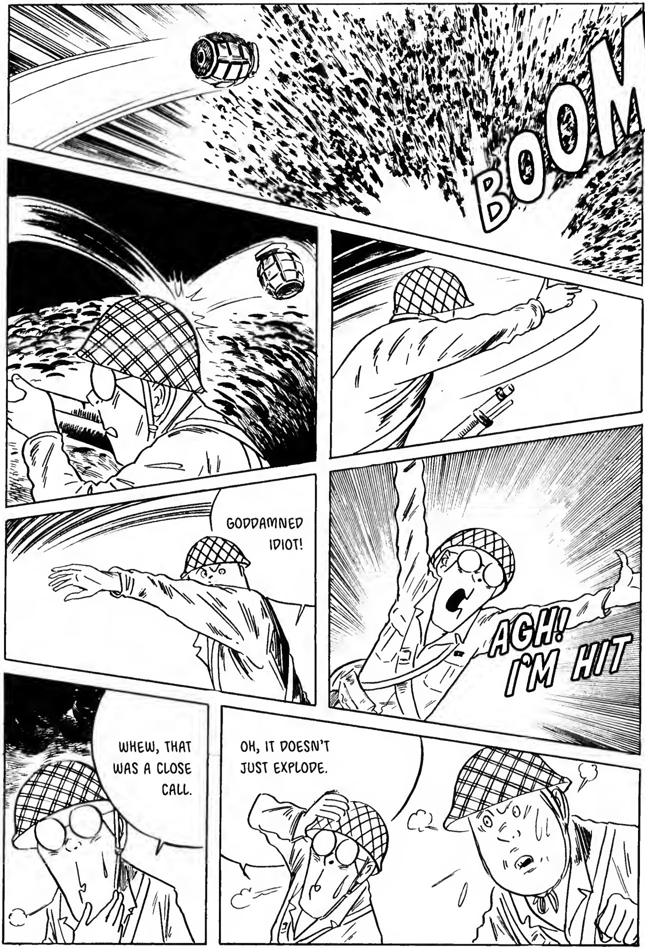

HOLD HIM DOWN.
UGH.
Ugh
CAN YOU HELP A MAN THIS FAR GONE, DOCTOR?
MY JOB IS TO EXTEND THE LIVES OF THESE MEN, EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR A FEW SECONDS.
I'M A DOCTOR.
...YES, SIR.

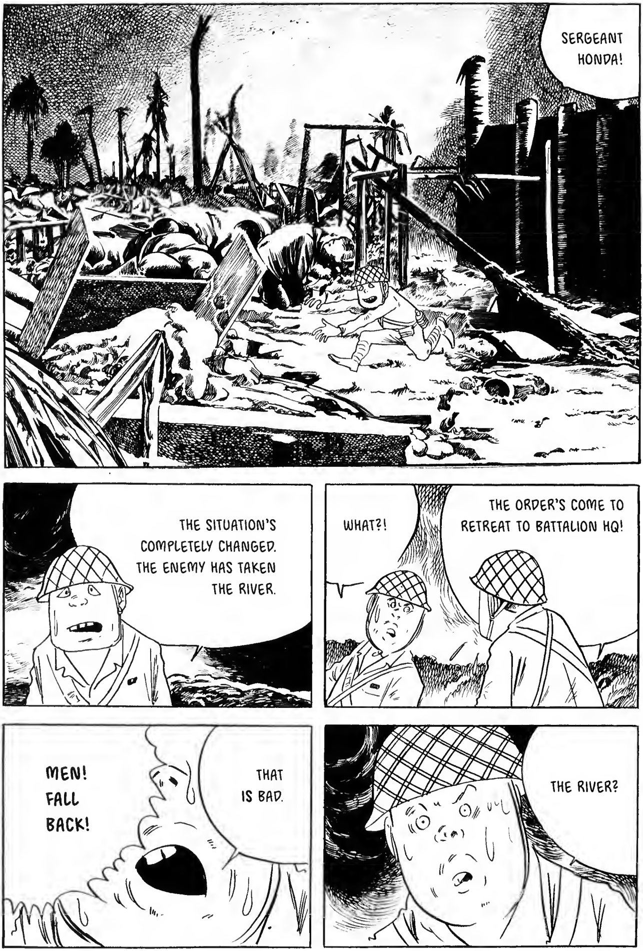

AAAGH
GET IN LINE!
OUT OF THE WAY!
IT HURTS IT HURTS
VROOOOOM

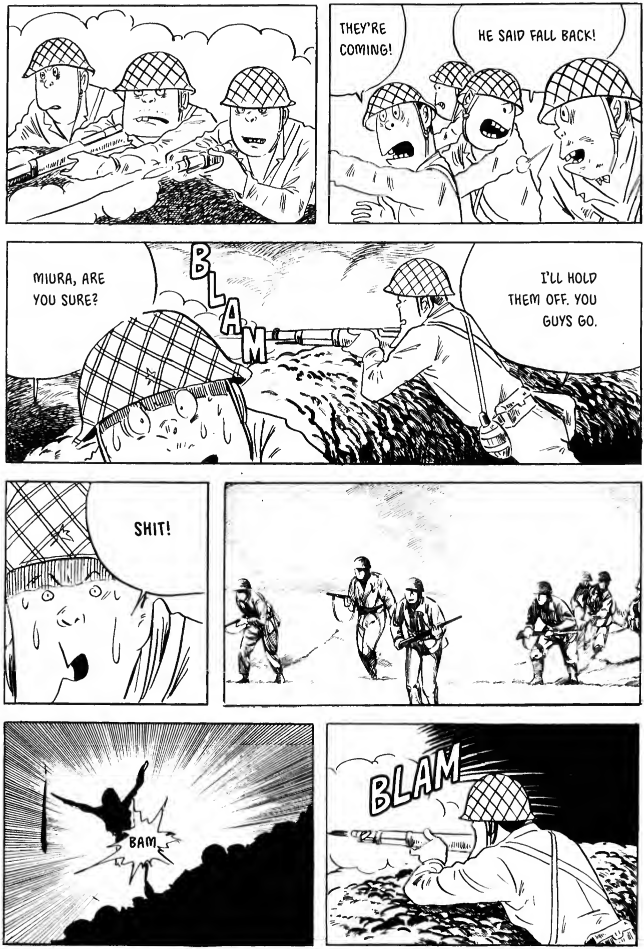

THEY'RE HERE!
BLAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
SIR!
THE CORPSMAN ASKED ME TO HELP, SO—
MARUYAMA, WHAT THE HELL'RE YOU DOIN'?
HURRY UP AND FIRE!
IDIOT!
WHAAAAP

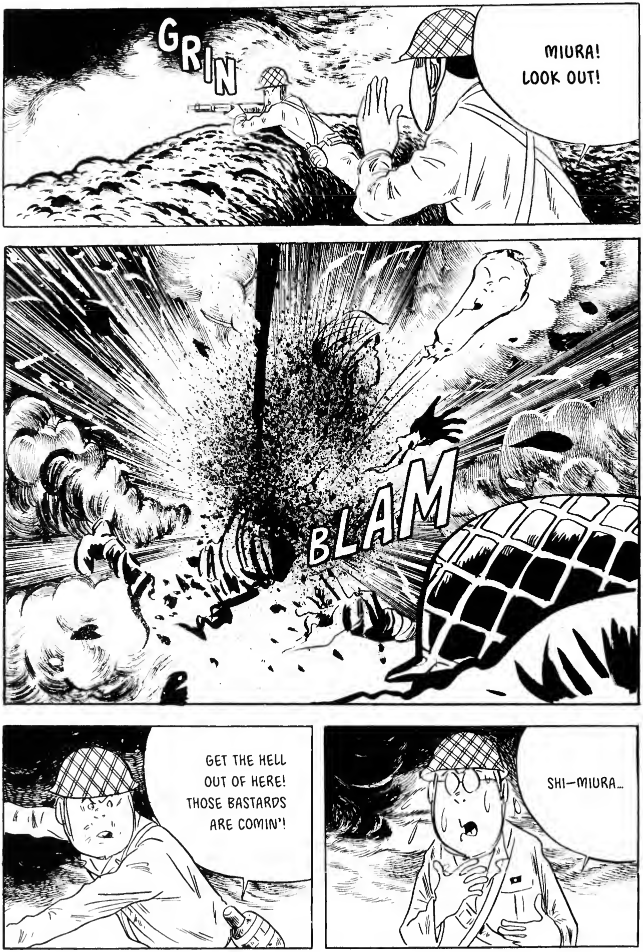

BLAM
PLOP
!! ?
GRENADES! SEND 'EM BACK! NOW!
BOOM


KONK
KUNK
PLOP
BOOM
PLOP

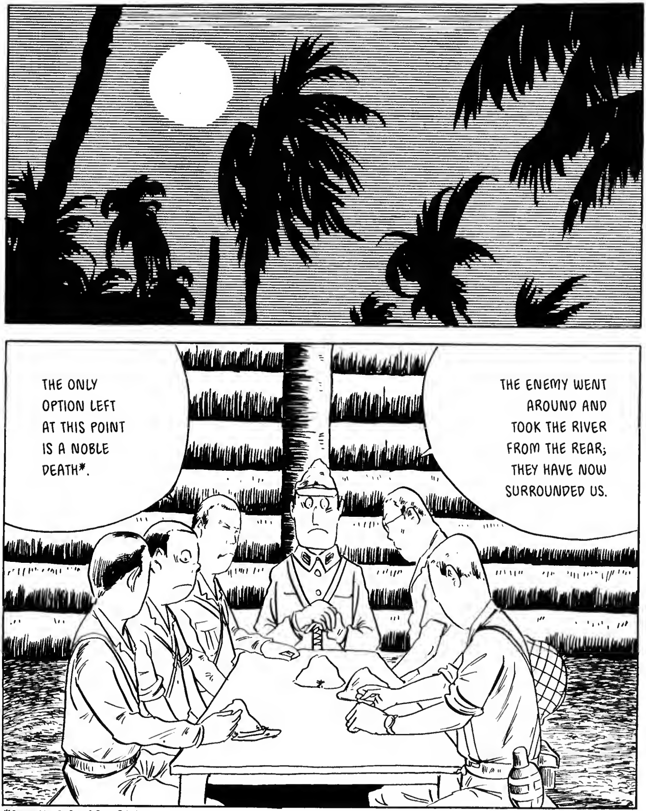

BOOM
GODDAMNED IDIOT!
AGH! I'M HIT
WHEW, THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL.
OH, IT DOESN'T JUST EXPLODE.


SERGEANT HONDA!
THE SITUATION'S COMPLETELY CHANGED. THE ENEMY HAS TAKEN THE RIVER.
WHAT?!
THE ORDER'S COME TO RETREAT TO BATTALION HQ!
MEN! FALL BACK!
THAT IS BAD.
THE RIVER?


THEY'RE COMING!
HE SAID FALL BACK!
BLAM
MIURA, ARE YOU SURE?
I'LL HOLD THEM OFF. YOU GUYS GO.
SHIT!
BAM
BLAM


GRIN
MIURA! LOOK OUT!
BLAM
GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE! THOSE BASTARDS ARE COMIN'!
SHI—MIURA...

THE DEATH OF SERGEANT HONDA


THE ENEMY WENT AROUND AND TOOK THE RIVER FROM THE REAR; THEY HAVE NOW SURROUNDED US.
THE ONLY OPTION LEFT AT THIS POINT IS A NOBLE DEATH*.

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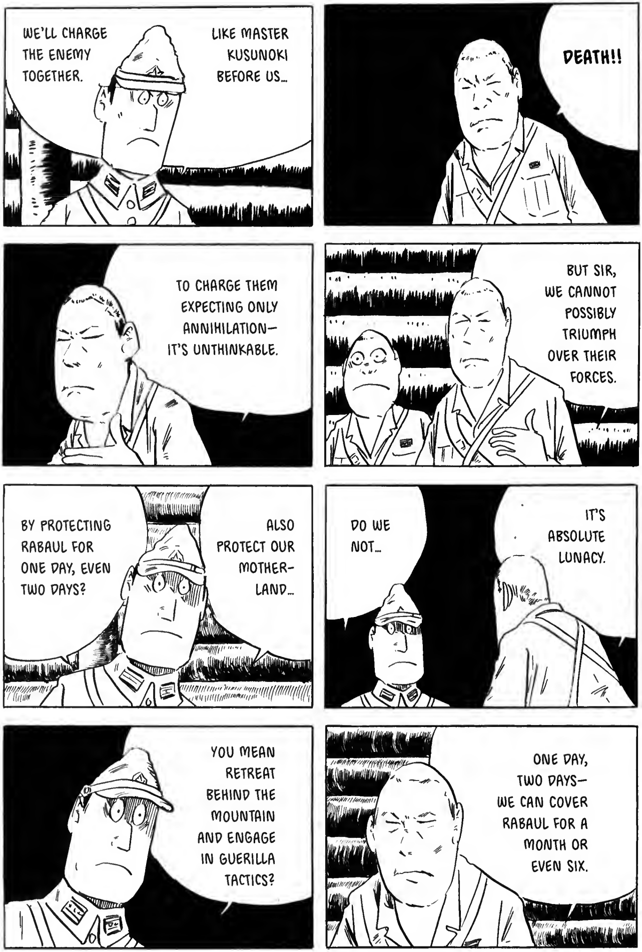
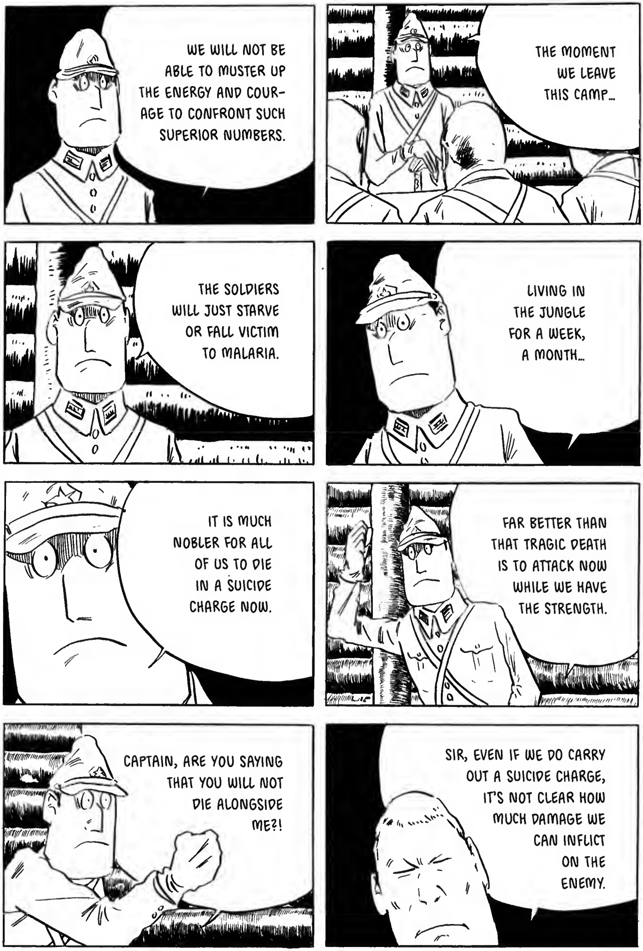
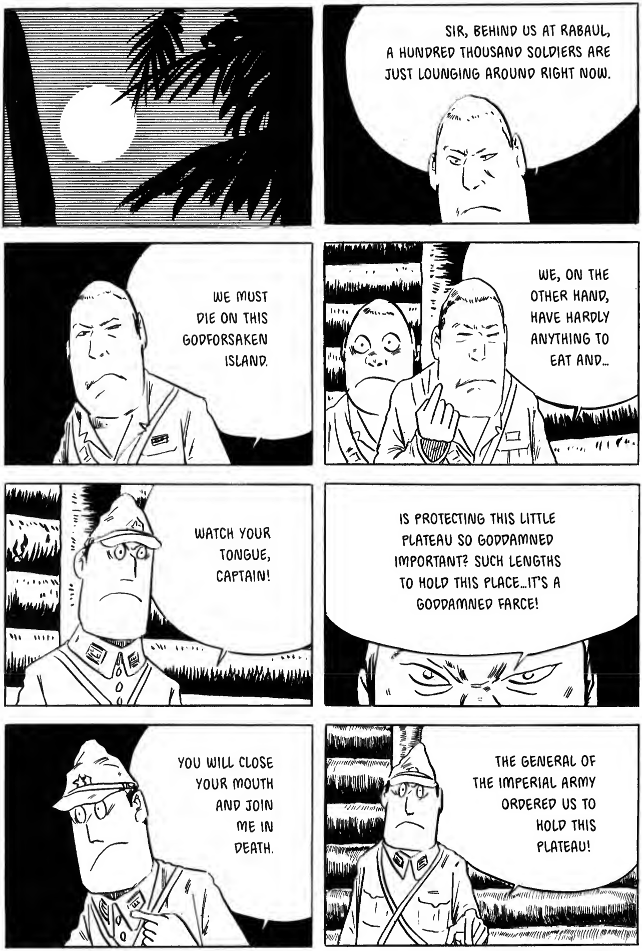
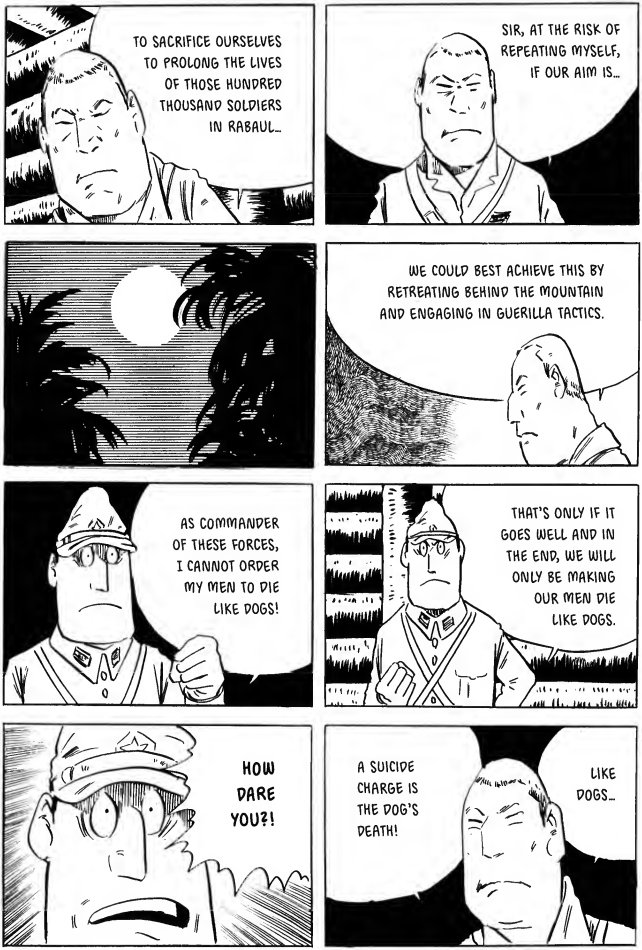
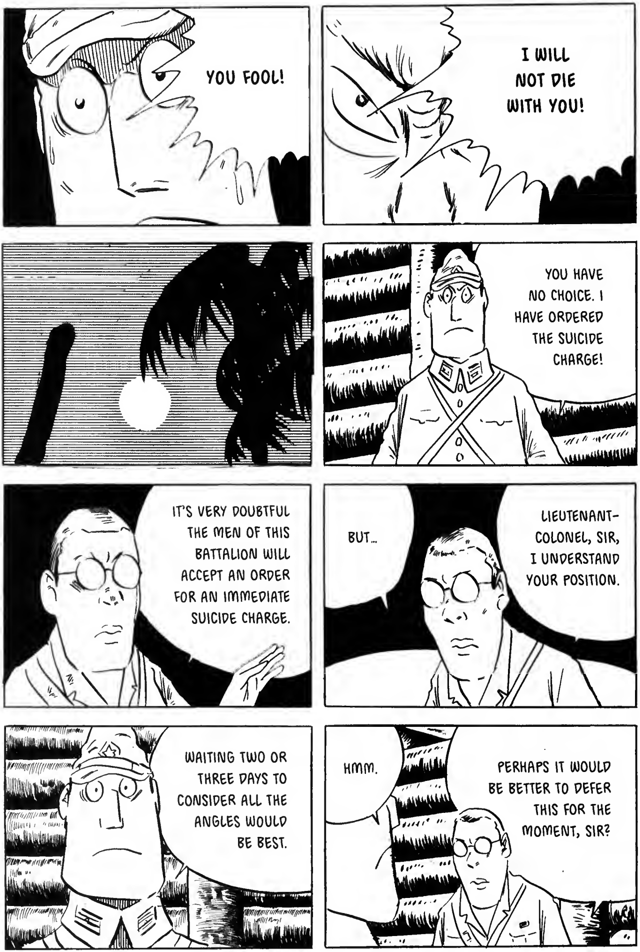
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

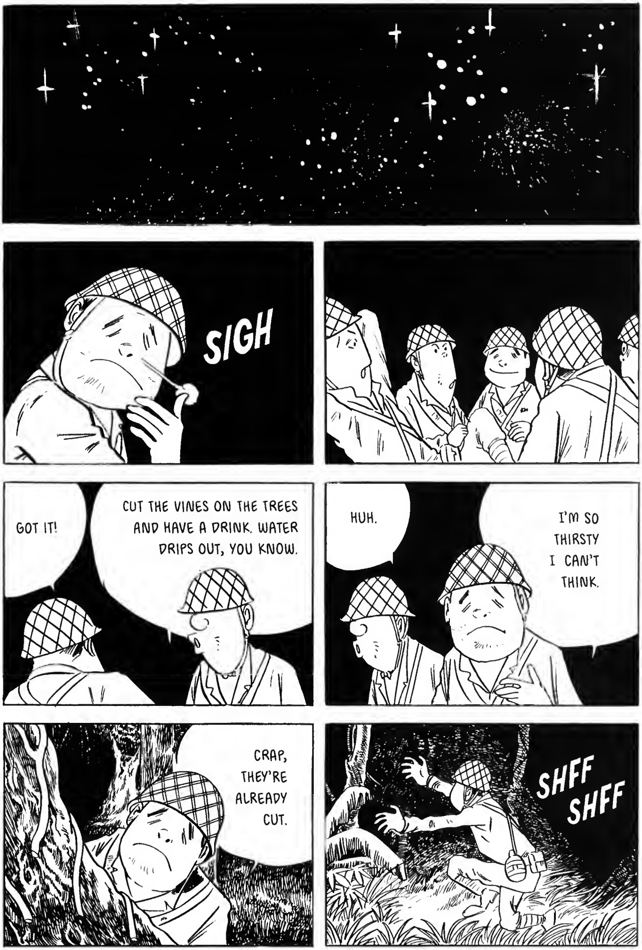

WE'LL CHARGE THE ENEMY TOGETHER.
LIKE MASTER KUSUNOKI BEFORE US...
DEATH!!
TO CHARGE THEM EXPECTING ONLY ANNIHILATION— IT'S UNTHINKABLE.
BUT SIR, WE CANNOT POSSIBLY TRIUMPH OVER THEIR FORCES.
BY PROTECTING RABAUL FOR ONE DAY, EVEN TWO DAYS?
ALSO PROTECT OUR MOTHERLAND...
DO WE NOT...
IT'S ABSOLUTE LUNACY.
YOU MEAN RETREAT BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN AND ENGAGE IN GUERILLA TACTICS?
ONE DAY, TWO DAYS— WE CAN COVER RABAUL FOR A MONTH OR EVEN SIX.

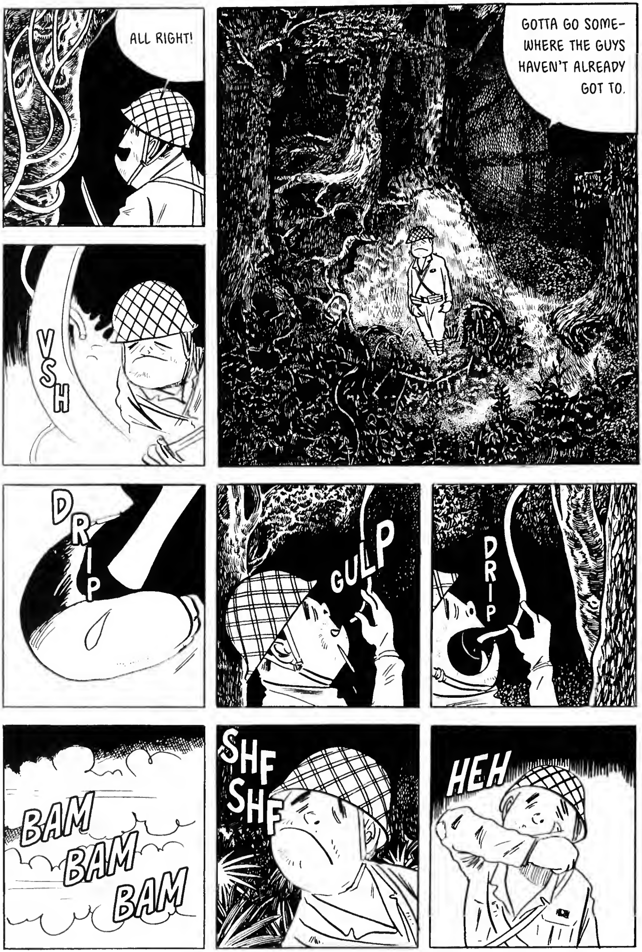

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MUSTER UP THE ENERGY AND COURAGE TO CONFRONT SUCH SUPERIOR NUMBERS.
THE MOMENT WE LEAVE THIS CAMP...
THE SOLDIERS WILL JUST STARVE OR FALL VICTIM TO MALARIA.
LIVING IN THE JUNGLE FOR A WEEK, A MONTH...
IT IS MUCH NOBLER FOR ALL OF US TO DIE IN A SUICIDE CHARGE NOW.
FAR BETTER THAN THAT TRAGIC DEATH IS TO ATTACK NOW WHILE WE HAVE THE STRENGTH.
CAPTAIN, ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOU WILL NOT DIE ALONGSIDE ME?!
SIR, EVEN IF WE DO CARRY OUT A SUICIDE CHARGE, IT'S NOT CLEAR HOW MUCH DAMAGE WE CAN INFLICT ON THE ENEMY.

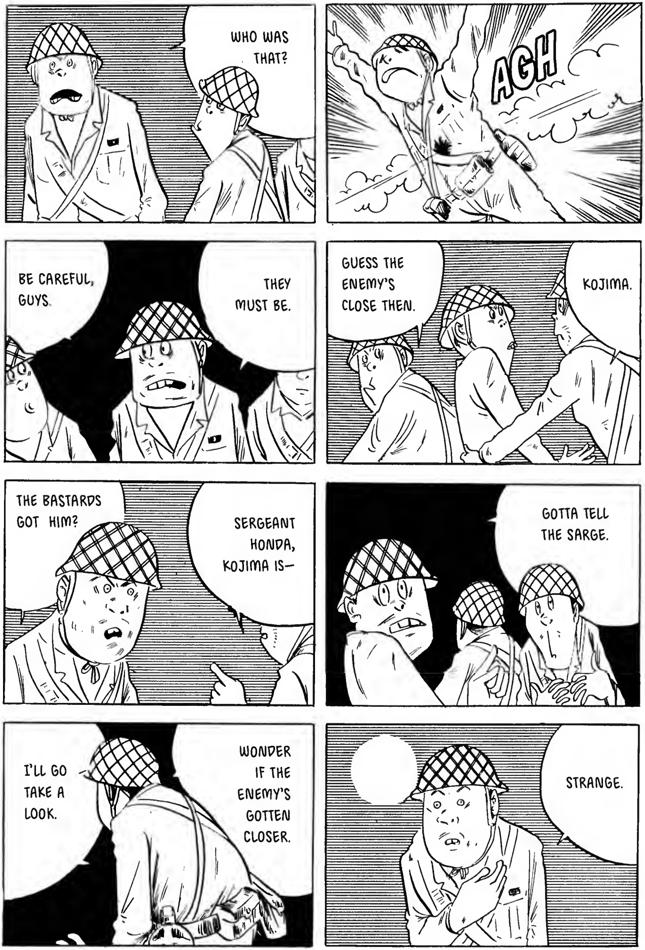

SIR, BEHIND US AT RABAUL, A HUNDRED THOUSAND SOLDIERS ARE JUST LOUNGING AROUND RIGHT NOW.
WE MUST DIE ON THIS GODFORSAKEN ISLAND.
WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE HARDLY ANYTHING TO EAT AND...
WATCH YOUR TONGUE, CAPTAIN!
IS PROTECTING THIS LITTLE PLATEAU SO GODDAMNED IMPORTANT? SUCH LENGTHS TO HOLD THIS PLACE...IT'S A GODDAMNED FARCE!
YOU WILL CLOSE YOUR MOUTH AND JOIN ME IN DEATH.
THE GENERAL OF THE IMPERIAL ARMY ORDERED US TO HOLD THIS PLATEAU!

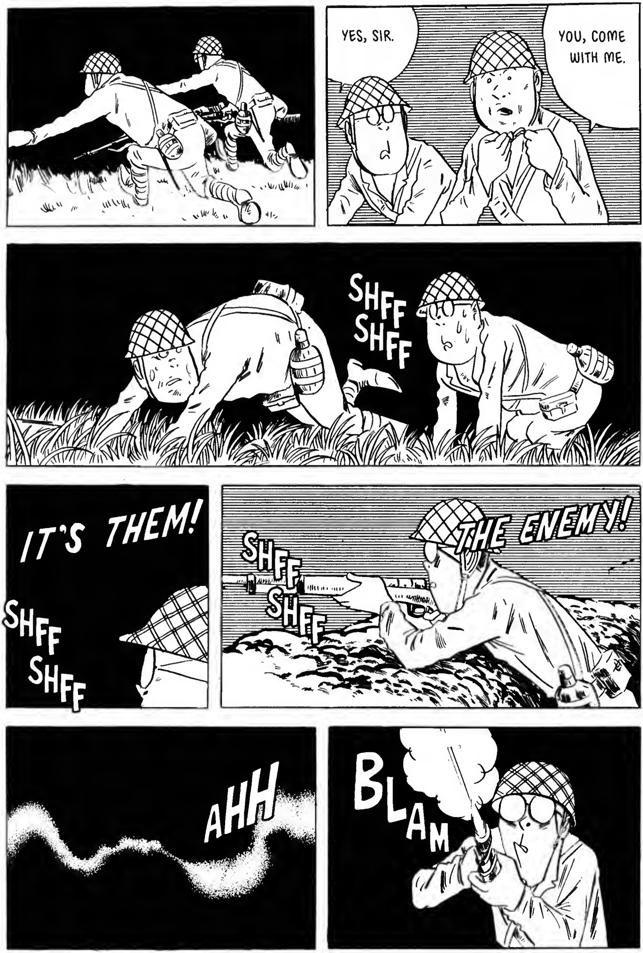

TO SACRIFICE OURSELVES TO PROLONG THE LIVES OF THOSE HUNDRED THOUSAND SOLDIERS IN RABAUL...
SIR, AT THE RISK OF REPEATING MYSELF, IF OUR AIM IS...
WE COULD BEST ACHIEVE THIS BY RETREATING BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN AND ENGAGING IN GUERILLA TACTICS.
AS COMMANDER OF THESE FORCES, I CANNOT ORDER MY MEN TO DIE LIKE DOGS!
THAT'S ONLY IF IT GOES WELL AND IN THE END, WE WILL ONLY BE MAKING OUR MEN DIE LIKE DOGS.
HOW DARE YOU?!
A SUICIDE CHARGE IS THE DOG'S DEATH!
LIKE DOGS...

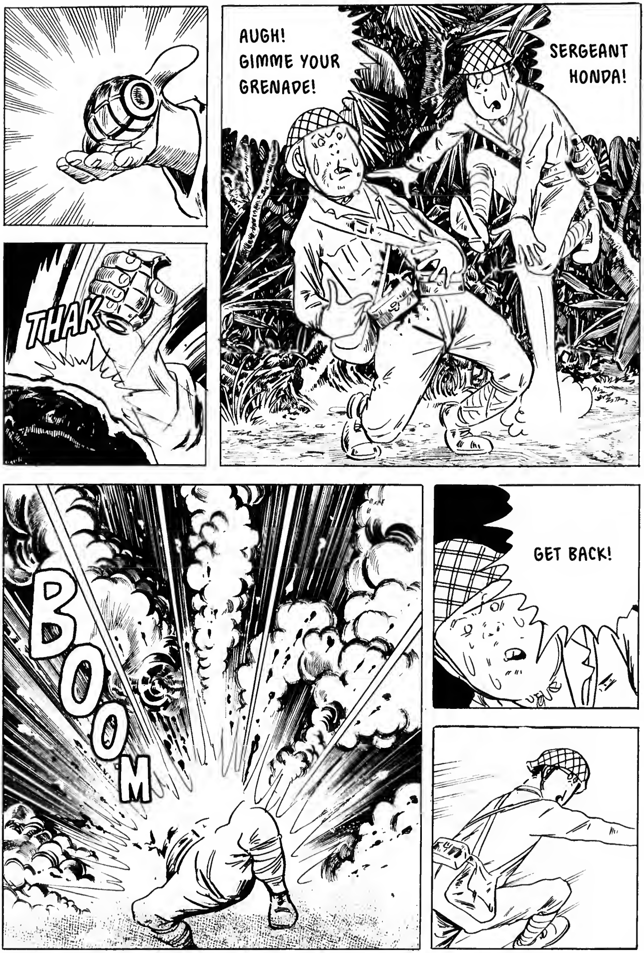

YOU FOOL!
I WILL NOT DIE WITH YOU!
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. I HAVE ORDERED THE SUICIDE CHARGE!
IT'S VERY DOUBTFUL THE MEN OF THIS BATTALION WILL ACCEPT AN ORDER FOR AN IMMEDIATE SUICIDE CHARGE.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, SIR, I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION.
BUT...
WAITING TWO OR THREE DAYS TO CONSIDER ALL THE ANGLES WOULD BE BEST.
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO DEFER THIS FOR THE MOMENT, SIR?
HMM.

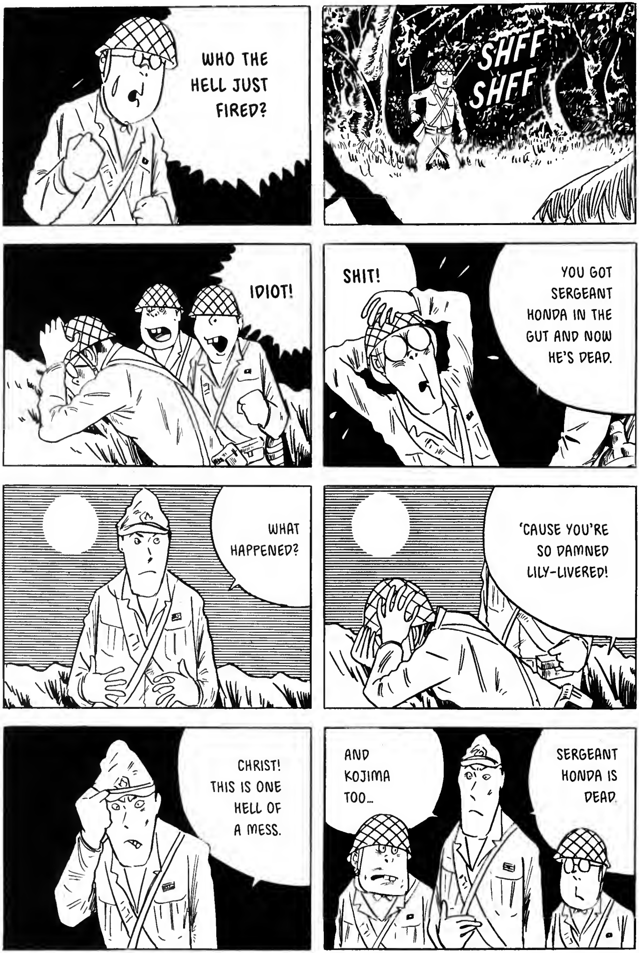

SIGH
I'M SO THIRSTY I CAN'T THINK.
HUH.
CUT THE VINES ON THE TREES AND HAVE A DRINK. WATER DRIPS OUT, YOU KNOW.
GOT IT!
SHFF SHFF
CRAP, THEY'RE ALREADY CUT.

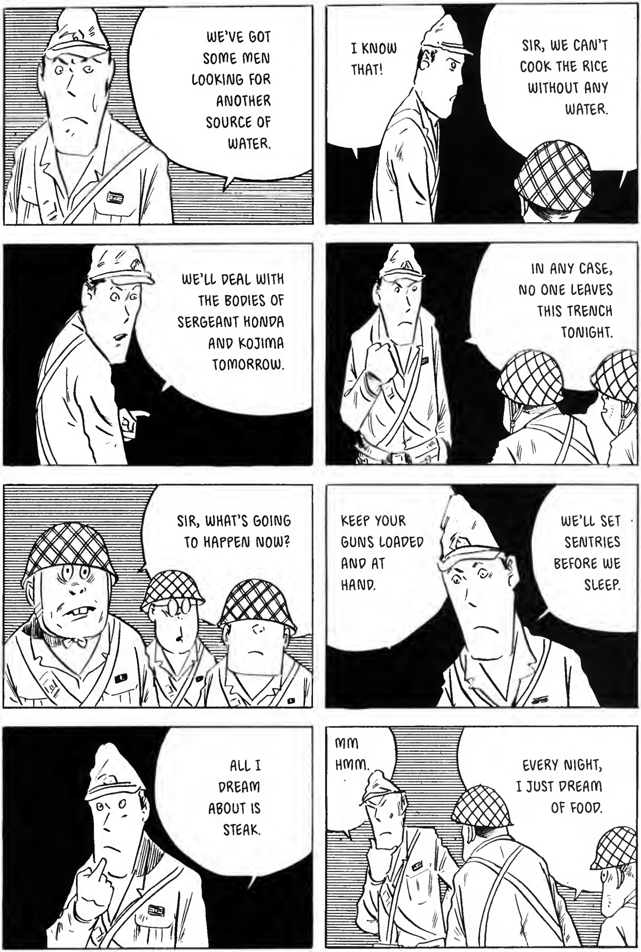

ALL RIGHT!
GOTTA GO SOMEWHERE THE GUYS HAVEN'T ALREADY GOT TO.
VSH
DRIP
GULP
DRIP
BAM
BAM
BAM
SHF SHF
HEH

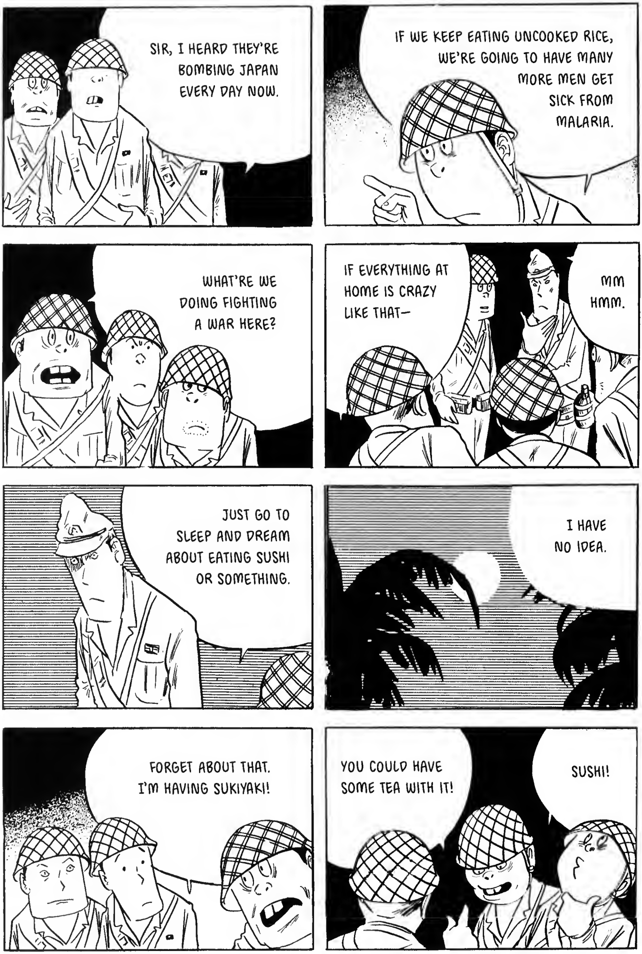

WHO WAS THAT?
AGH
BE CAREFUL, GUYS.
THEY MUST BE.
GUESS THE ENEMY'S CLOSE THEN.
KOJIMA.
THE BASTARDS GOT HIM?
SERGEANT HONDA, KOJIMA IS—
GOTTA TELL THE SARGE.
I'LL GO TAKE A LOOK.
WONDER IF THE ENEMY'S GOTTEN CLOSER.
STRANGE.

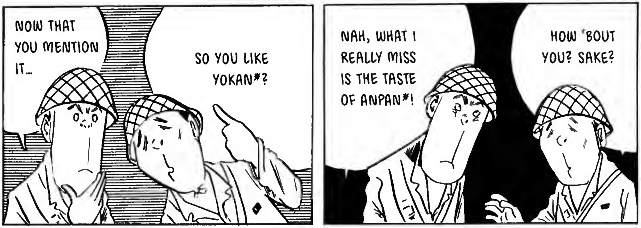

YOU, COME WITH ME.
YES, SIR.
SHFF SHFF
IT'S THEM!
SHFF SHFF
THE ENEMY!
SHFF SHFF
AHH
BLAM


THAK
AUGH! GIMME YOUR GRENADE!
SERGEANT HONDA!
BOOM
GET BACK!


WHO THE HELL JUST FIRED?
SHFF SHFF
IDIOT!
SHIT!
YOU GOT SERGEANT HONDA IN THE GUT AND NOW HE'S DEAD.
WHAT HAPPENED?
'CAUSE YOU'RE SO DAMNED LILY-LIVERED!
CHRIST! THIS IS ONE HELL OF A MESS.
SERGEANT HONDA IS DEAD.
AND KOJIMA TOO...

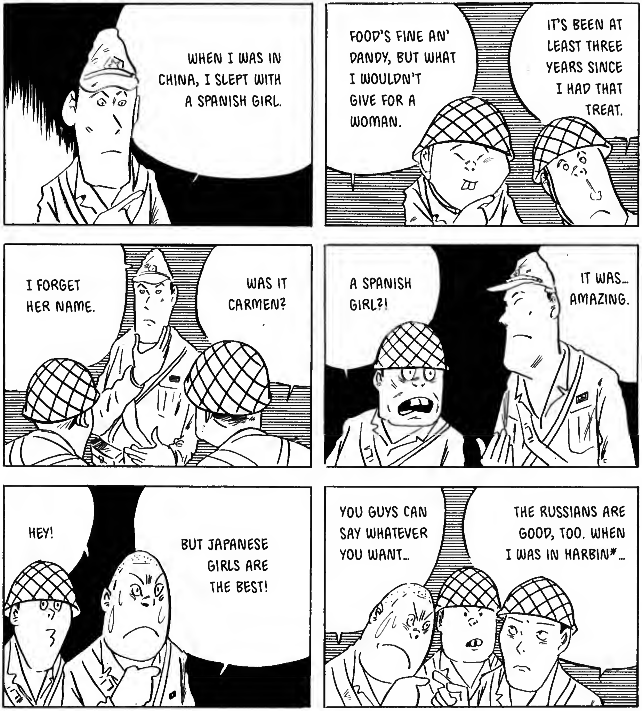

WE'VE GOT SOME MEN LOOKING FOR ANOTHER SOURCE OF WATER.
I KNOW THAT!
SIR, WE CAN'T COOK THE RICE WITHOUT ANY WATER.
WE'LL DEAL WITH THE BODIES OF SERGEANT HONDA AND KOJIMA TOMORROW.
IN ANY CASE, NO ONE LEAVES THIS TRENCH TONIGHT.
SIR, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?
KEEP YOUR GUNS LOADED AND AT HAND.
WE'LL SET SENTRIES BEFORE WE SLEEP.
ALL I DREAM ABOUT IS STEAK.
MM HMM.
EVERY NIGHT, I JUST DREAM OF FOOD.


SIR, I HEARD THEY'RE BOMBING JAPAN EVERY DAY NOW.
IF WE KEEP EATING UNCOOKED RICE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE MANY MORE MEN GET SICK FROM MALARIA.
WHAT'RE WE DOING FIGHTING A WAR HERE?
IF EVERYTHING AT HOME IS CRAZY LIKE THAT—
MM HMM.
JUST GO TO SLEEP AND DREAM ABOUT EATING SUSHI OR SOMETHING.
I HAVE NO IDEA.
FORGET ABOUT THAT. I'M HAVING SUKIYAKI!
YOU COULD HAVE SOME TEA WITH IT!
SUSHI!

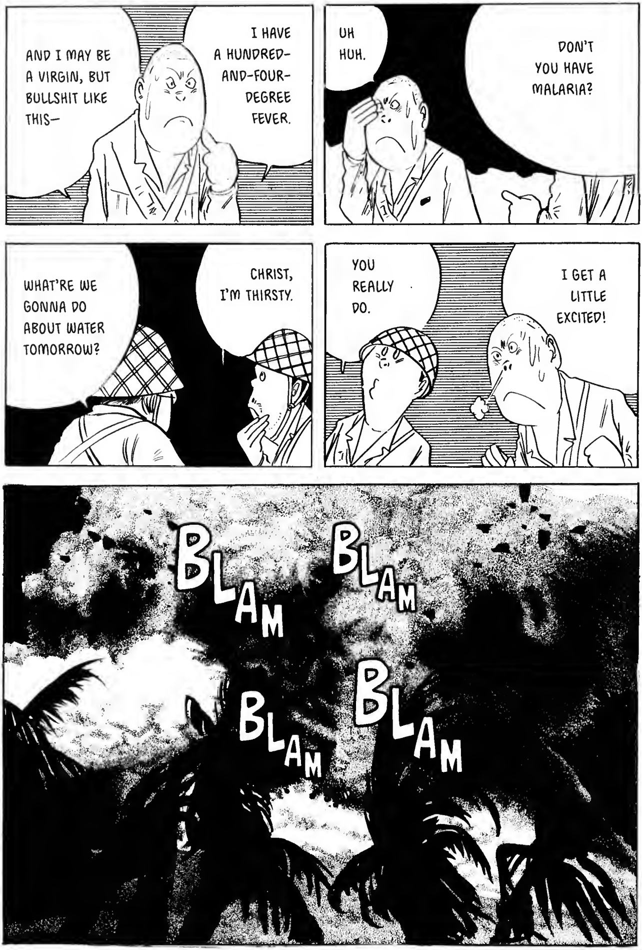

HOW 'BOUT YOU? SAKE?
NAH, WHAT I REALLY MISS IS THE TASTE OF ANPAN*!
SO YOU LIKE YOKAN*?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

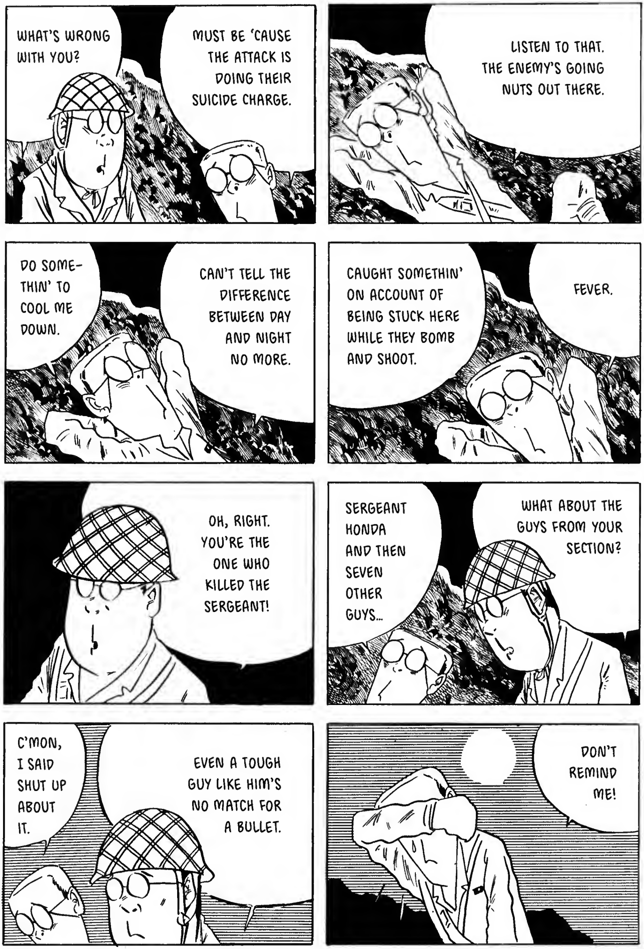
*A SWEET BEAN JELLY.

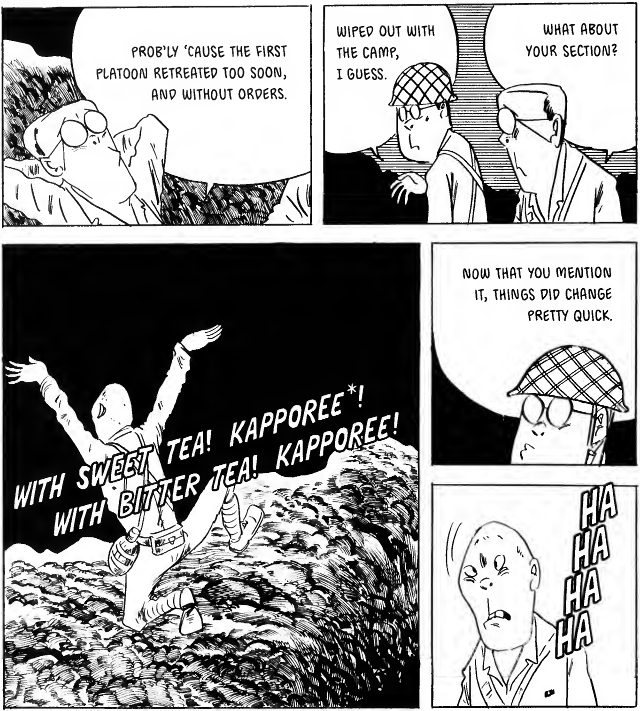
*BUN FILLED WITH A SWEET BEAN PASTE.


IT'S BEEN AT LEAST THREE YEARS SINCE I HAD THAT TREAT.
FOOD'S FINE AN' DANDY, BUT WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR A WOMAN.
WHEN I WAS IN CHINA, I SLEPT WITH A SPANISH GIRL.
IT WAS... AMAZING.
A SPANISH GIRL?!
WAS IT CARMEN?
I FORGET HER NAME.
THE RUSSIANS ARE GOOD, TOO. WHEN I WAS IN HARBIN*...
YOU GUYS CAN SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT...
BUT JAPANESE GIRLS ARE THE BEST!
HEY!

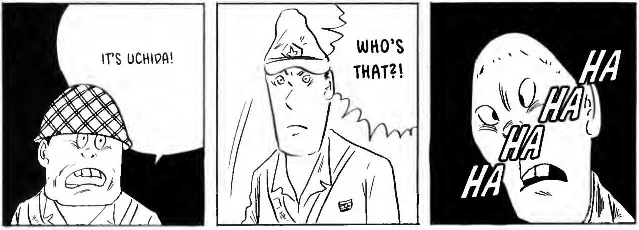
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

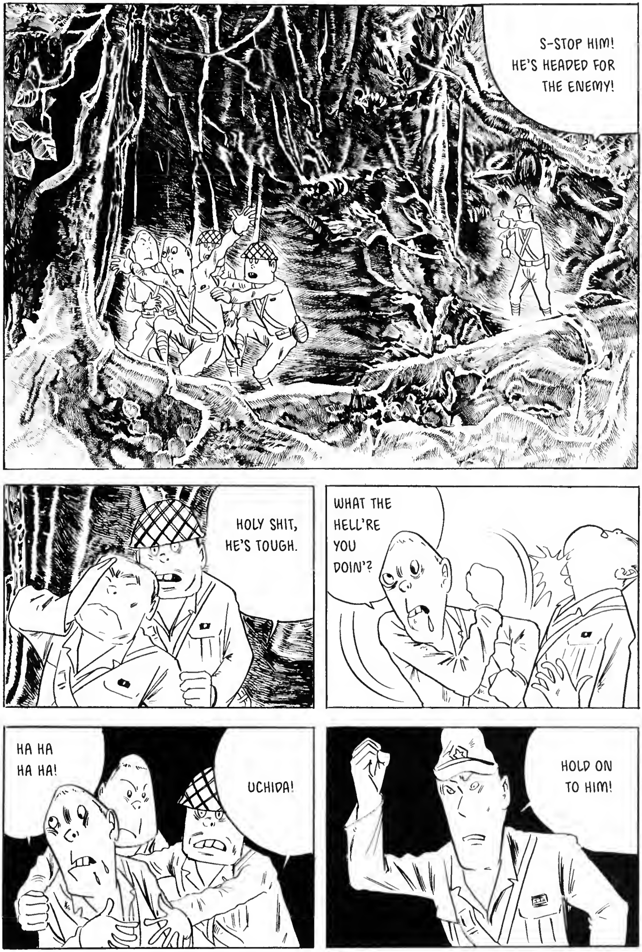

DON'T YOU HAVE MALARIA?
UH HUH.
I HAVE A HUNDRED-AND-FOUR-DEGREE FEVER.
AND I MAY BE A VIRGIN, BUT BULLSHIT LIKE THIS—
I GET A LITTLE EXCITED!
YOU REALLY DO.
CHRIST, I'M THIRSTY.
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO ABOUT WATER TOMORROW?
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

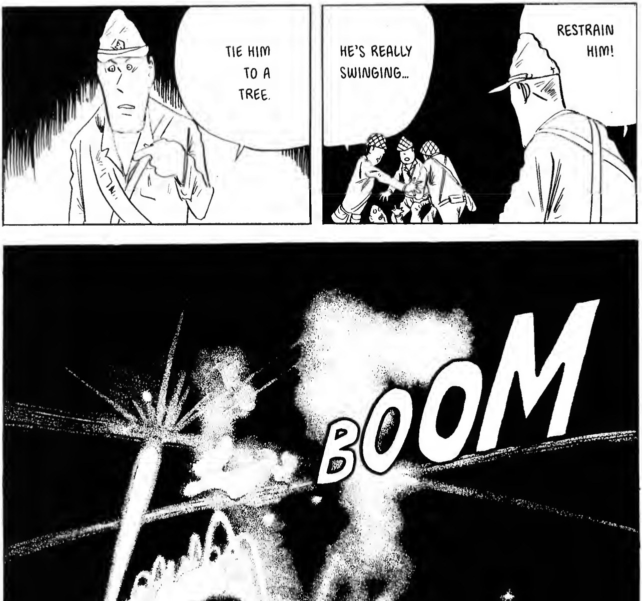

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
MUST BE 'CAUSE THE ATTACK IS DOING THEIR SUICIDE CHARGE.
LISTEN TO THAT. THE ENEMY'S GOING NUTS OUT THERE.
DO SOMETHIN' TO COOL ME DOWN.
CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT NO MORE.
CAUGHT SOMETHIN' ON ACCOUNT OF BEING STUCK HERE WHILE THEY BOMB AND SHOOT.
FEVER.
OH, RIGHT. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KILLED THE SERGEANT!
SERGEANT HONDA AND THEN SEVEN OTHER GUYS...
WHAT ABOUT THE GUYS FROM YOUR SECTION?
C'MON, I SAID SHUT UP ABOUT IT.
EVEN A TOUGH GUY LIKE HIM'S NO MATCH FOR A BULLET.
DON'T REMIND ME!


PROB'LY 'CAUSE THE FIRST PLATOON RETREATED TOO SOON, AND WITHOUT ORDERS.
WIPED OUT WITH THE CAMP, I GUESS.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR SECTION?
WITH SWEET TEA! KAPPOREE*! WITH BITTER TEA! KAPPOREE!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THINGS DID CHANGE PRETTY QUICK.
HA HA HA HA

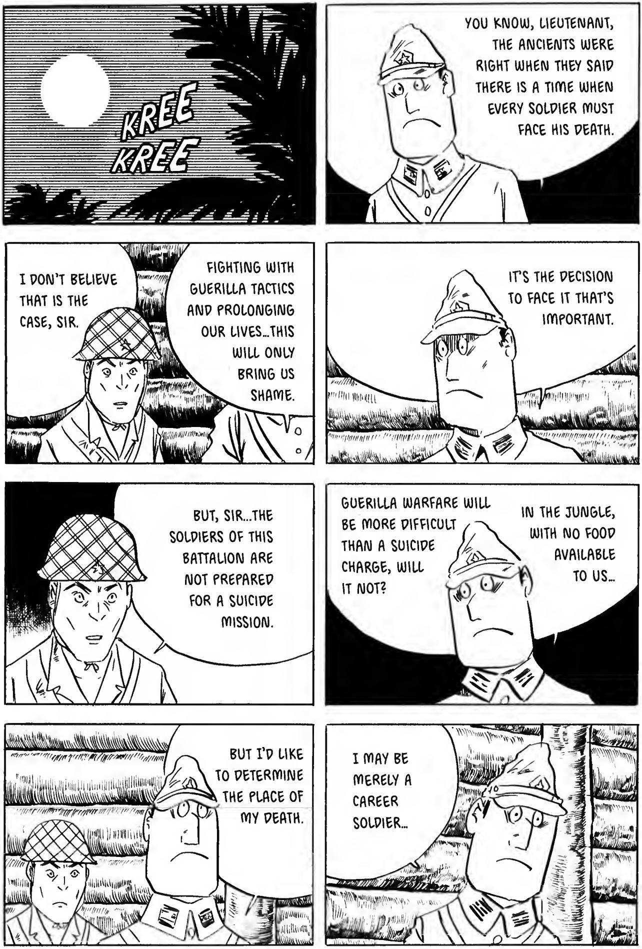
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

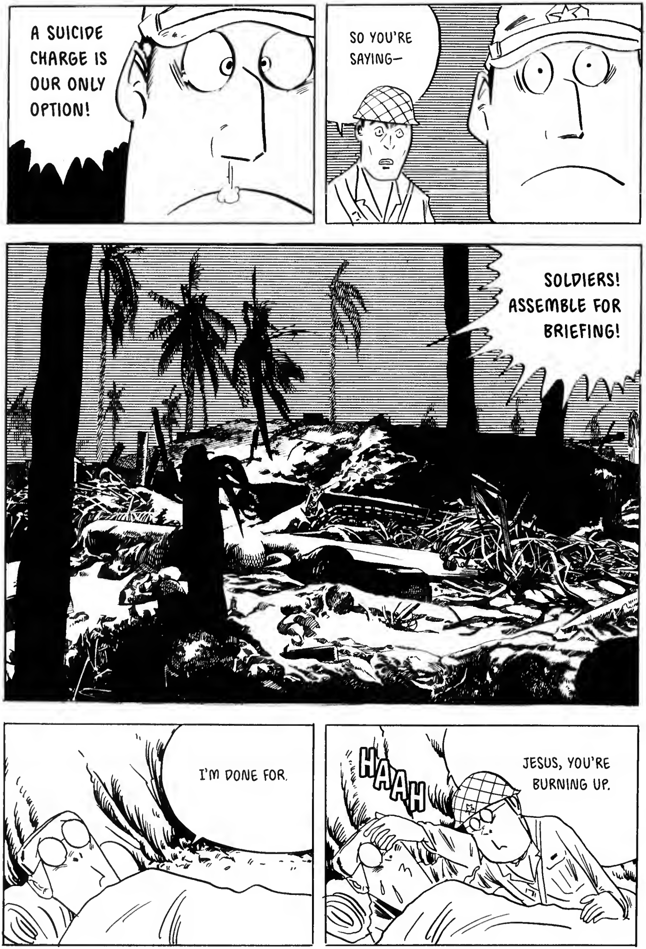

IT'S UCHIDA!
WHO'S THAT?!
HA HA HA HA HA

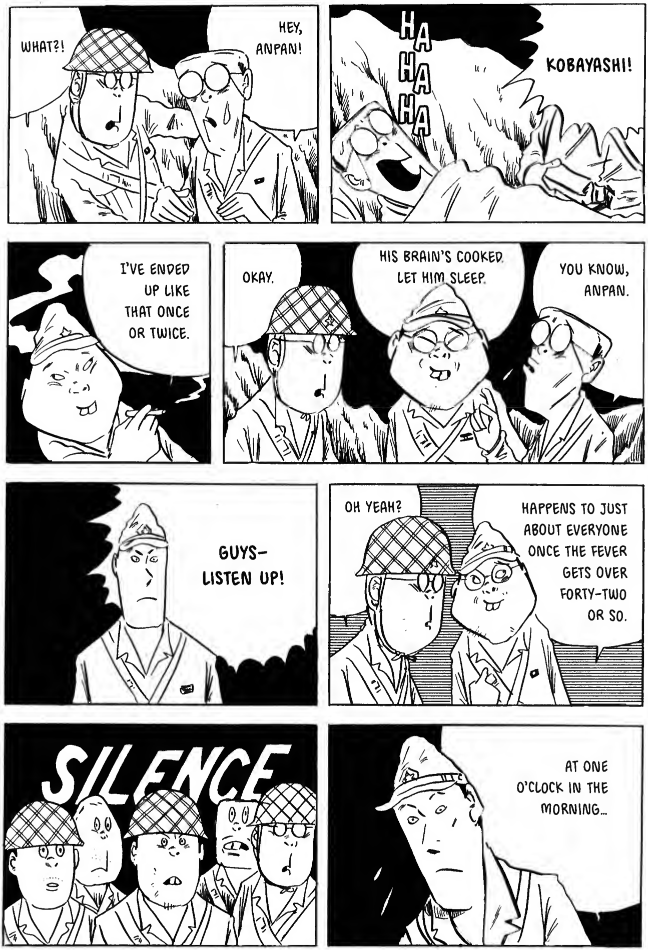

S-STOP HIM! HE'S HEADED FOR THE ENEMY!
HOLY SHIT, HE'S TOUGH.
WHAT THE HELL'RE YOU DOIN'?
HA HA HA HA!
UCHIDA!
HOLD ON TO HIM!

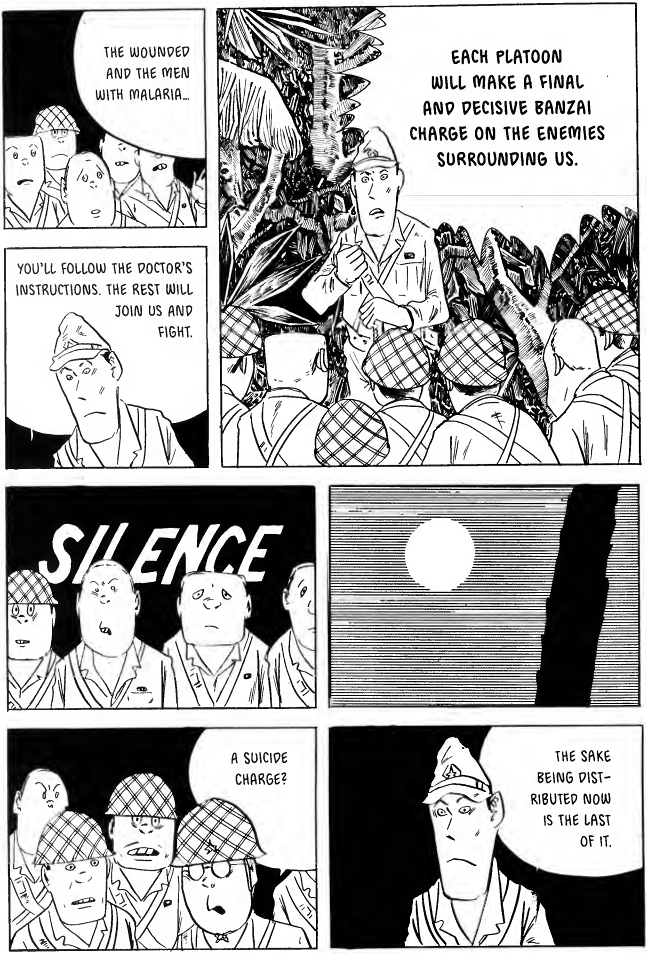

TIE HIM TO A TREE.
HE'S REALLY SWINGING...
RESTRAIN HIM!
BOOM
ASKED ABOUT THE YAMATO SPIRIT OF SHIKISHIMA*
THE FRAGRANCE OF THE MOUNTAIN CHERRY BLOSSOM IN THE MORNING SUN

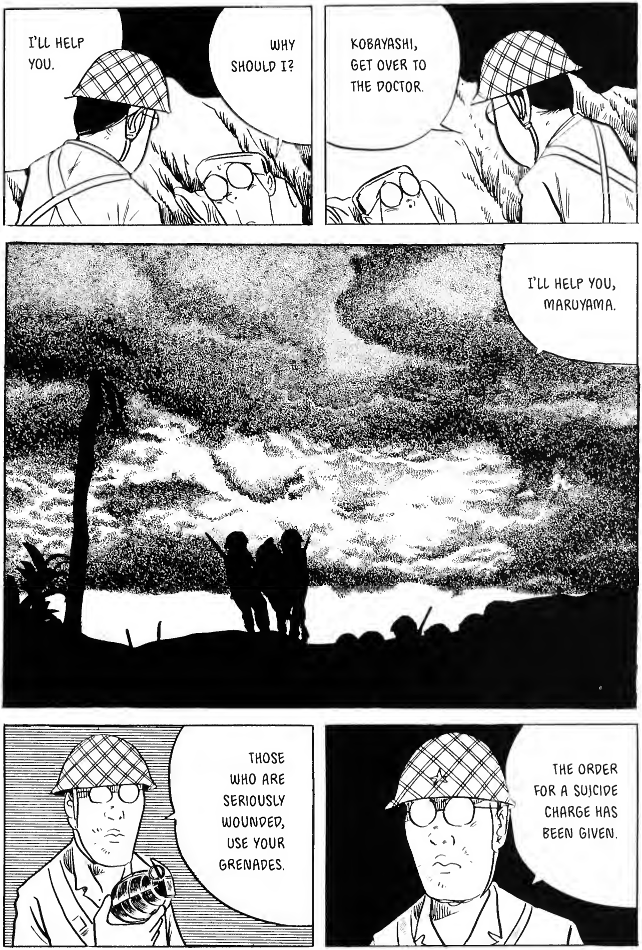
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

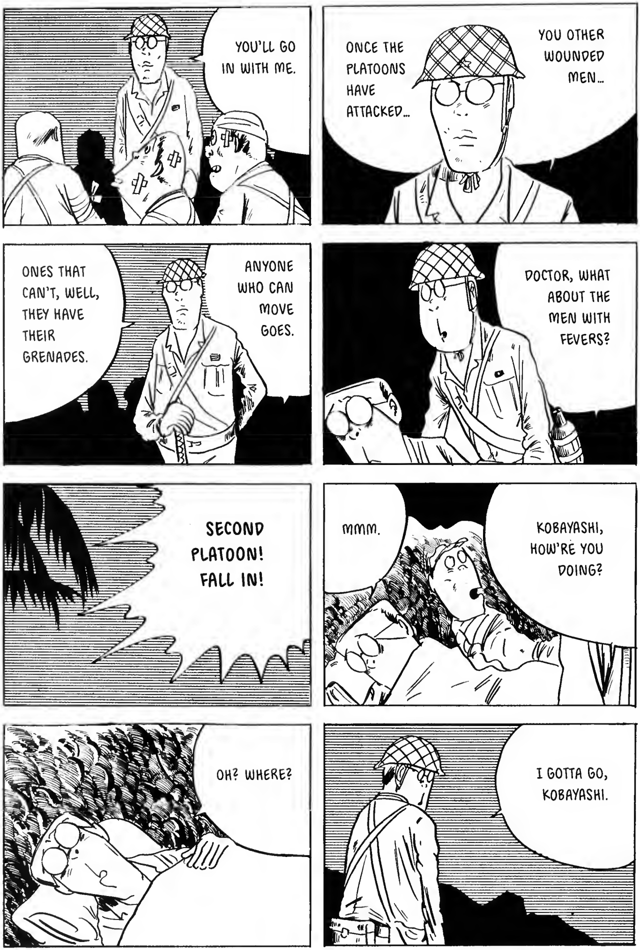

KREE KREE
YOU KNOW, LIEUTENANT, THE ANCIENTS WERE RIGHT WHEN THEY SAID THERE IS A TIME WHEN EVERY SOLDIER MUST FACE HIS DEATH.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IS THE CASE, SIR.
FIGHTING WITH GUERILLA TACTICS AND PROLONGING OUR LIVES…THIS WILL ONLY BRING US SHAME.
IT'S THE DECISION TO FACE IT THAT'S IMPORTANT.
BUT, SIR…THE SOLDIERS OF THIS BATTALION ARE NOT PREPARED FOR A SUICIDE MISSION.
GUERILLA WARFARE WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN A SUICIDE CHARGE, WILL IT NOT?
IN THE JUNGLE, WITH NO FOOD AVAILABLE TO US…
BUT I'D LIKE TO DETERMINE THE PLACE OF MY DEATH.
I MAY BE MERELY A CAREER SOLDIER…

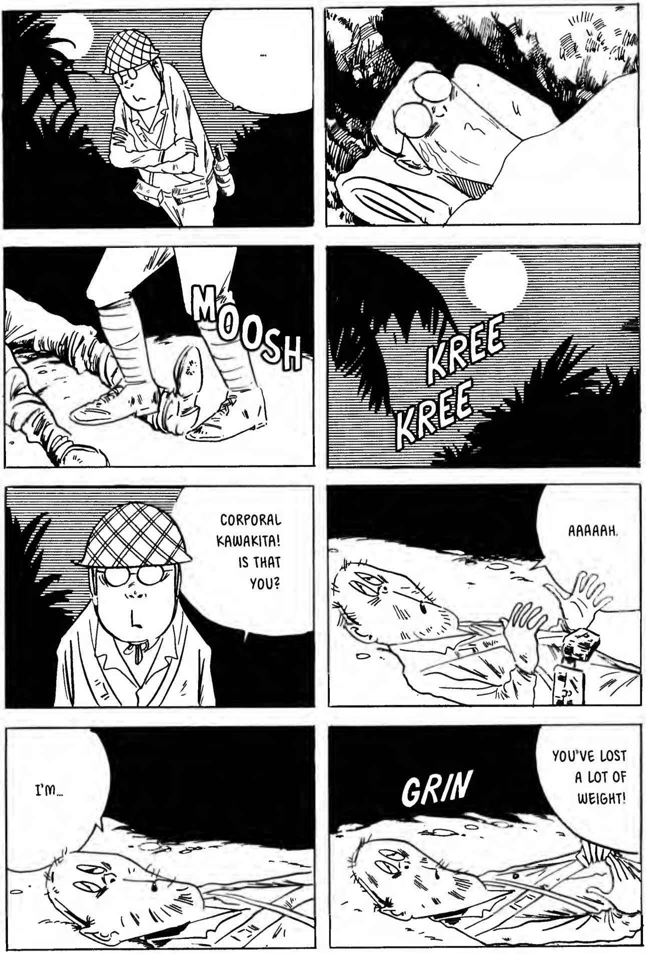

A SUICIDE CHARGE IS OUR ONLY OPTION!
SO YOU'RE SAYING—
SOLDIERS! ASSEMBLE FOR BRIEFING!
I'M DONE FOR.
HAAAH
JESUS, YOU'RE BURNING UP.

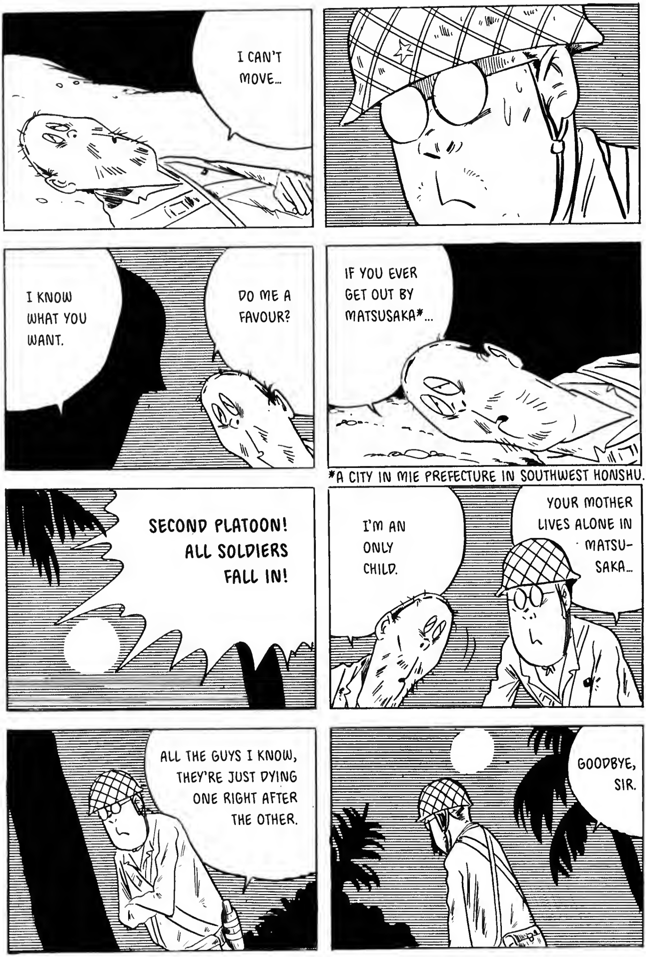

HEY, ANPAN!
WHAT?!
KOBAYASHI!
HA HA HA
I'VE ENDED UP LIKE THAT ONCE OR TWICE.
YOU KNOW, ANPAN.
HIS BRAIN'S COOKED. LET HIM SLEEP.
OKAY.
GUYS– LISTEN UP!
HAPPENS TO JUST ABOUT EVERYONE ONCE THE FEVER GETS OVER FORTY-TWO OR SO.
OH YEAH?
SILENCE
AT ONE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING…


THE WOUNDED AND THE MEN WITH MALARIA...
YOU'LL FOLLOW THE DOCTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS. THE REST WILL JOIN US AND FIGHT.
EACH PLATOON WILL MAKE A FINAL AND DECISIVE BANZAI CHARGE ON THE ENEMIES SURROUNDING US.
SILENCE
A SUICIDE CHARGE?
THE SAKE BEING DISTRIBUTED NOW IS THE LAST OF IT.


I'LL HELP YOU.
WHY SHOULD I?
KOBAYASHI, GET OVER TO THE DOCTOR.
I'LL HELP YOU, MARUYAMA.
THOSE WHO ARE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, USE YOUR GRENADES.
THE ORDER FOR A SUICIDE CHARGE HAS BEEN GIVEN.

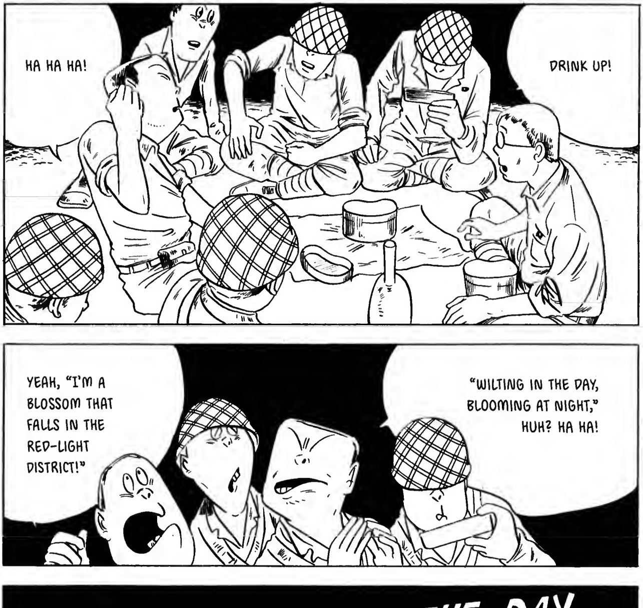

YOU'LL GO IN WITH ME.
YOU OTHER WOUNDED MEN...
ONCE THE PLATOONS HAVE ATTACKED...
ANYONE WHO CAN MOVE GOES.
ONES THAT CAN'T, WELL, THEY HAVE THEIR GRENADES.
DOCTOR, WHAT ABOUT THE MEN WITH FEVERS?
SECOND PLATOON! FALL IN!
KOBAYASHI, HOW'RE YOU DOING?
MMM.
OH? WHERE?
I GOTTA GO, KOBAYASHI.

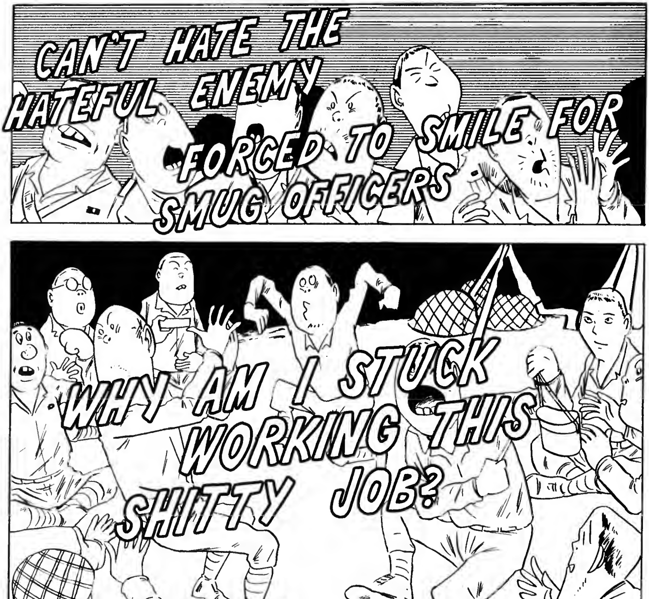

...
MOOSH
KREE KREE
CORPORAL KAWAKITA! IS THAT YOU?
AAAAAH.
I'M...
GRIN
YOU'VE LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT!

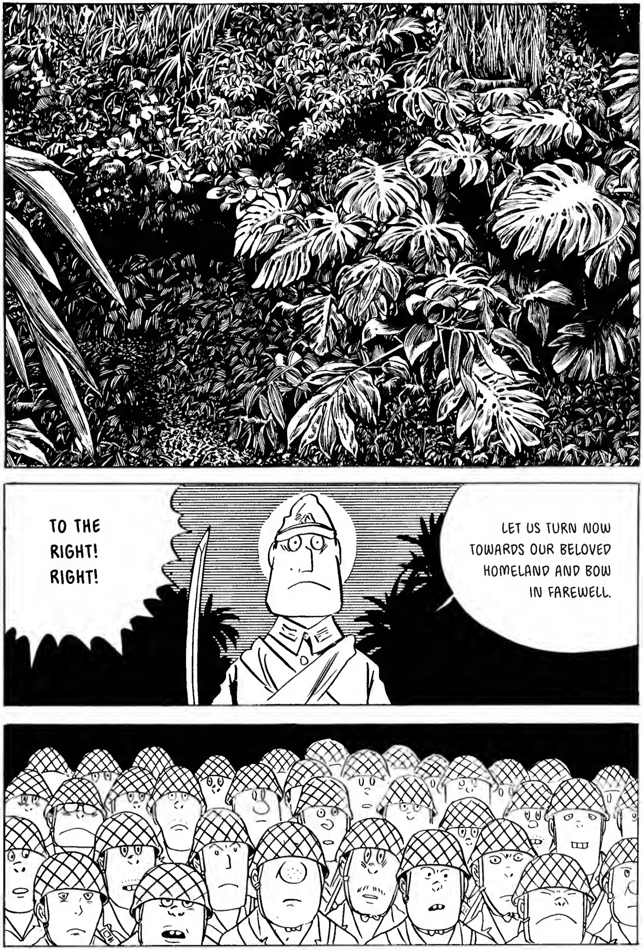

I CAN'T MOVE...
DO ME A FAVOUR?
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
IF YOU EVER GET OUT BY MATSUSAKA*...
SECOND PLATOON! ALL SOLDIERS FALL IN!
YOUR MOTHER LIVES ALONE IN MATSUSAKA...
I'M AN ONLY CHILD.
ALL THE GUYS I KNOW, THEY'RE JUST DYING ONE RIGHT AFTER THE OTHER.
GOODBYE, SIR.

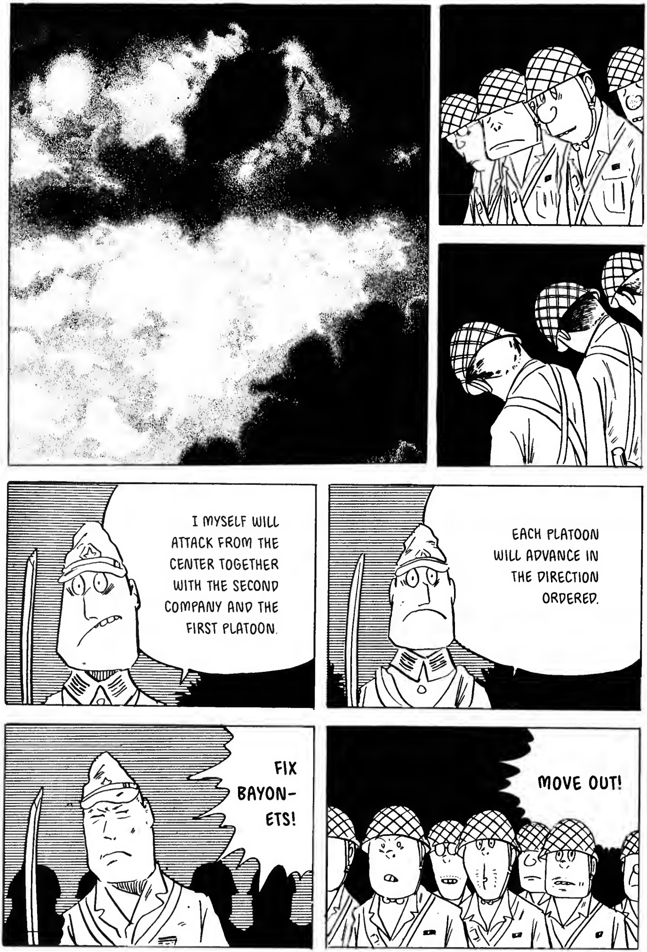
*A CITY IN MIE PREFECTURE IN SOUTHWEST HONSHU.

NOBLE DEATH

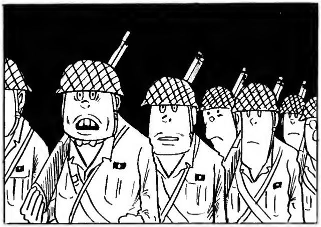

HA HA HA!
DRINK UP!
YEAH, "I'M A BLOSSOM THAT FALLS IN THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT!"
"WILTING IN THE DAY, BLOOMING AT NIGHT," HUH? HA HA!
WILTING IN THE DAY
BLOOMING AT NIGHT

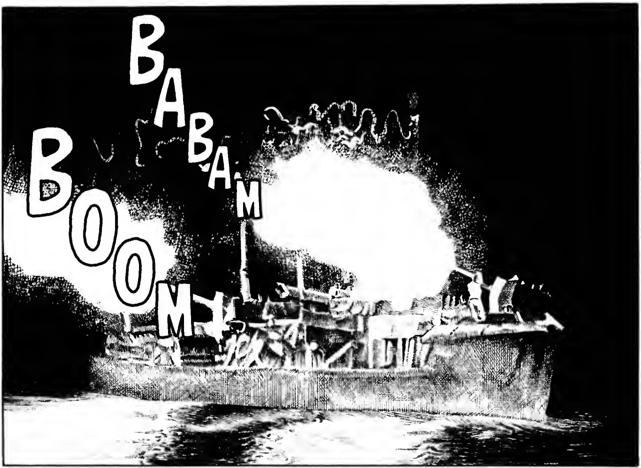

CAN'T HATE THE HATEFUL ENEMY
FORCED TO SMILE FOR SMUG OFFICERS
WHY AM I STUCK WORKING THIS SHITTY JOB?
HA HA HA!
NO WAY OUT
ALL FOR MY COUNTRY

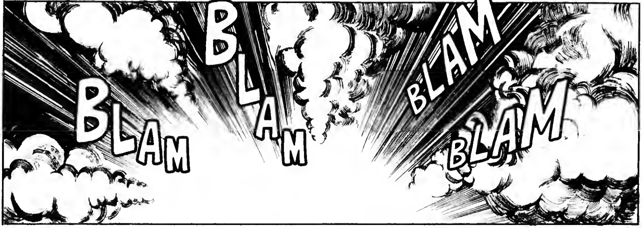

TO THE RIGHT! RIGHT!
LET US TURN NOW TOWARDS OUR BELOVED HOMELAND AND BOW IN FAREWELL.

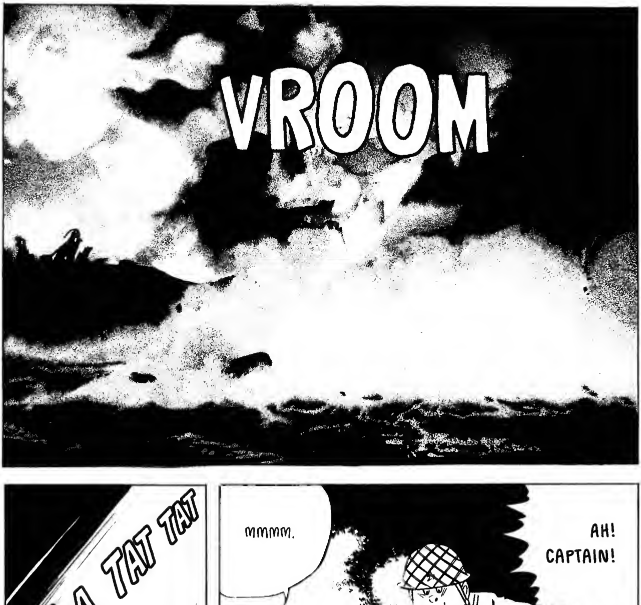

I MYSELF WILL ATTACK FROM THE CENTER TOGETHER WITH THE SECOND COMPANY AND THE FIRST PLATOON.
EACH PLATOON WILL ADVANCE IN THE DIRECTION ORDERED.
FIX BAYON-ETS!
MOVE OUT!

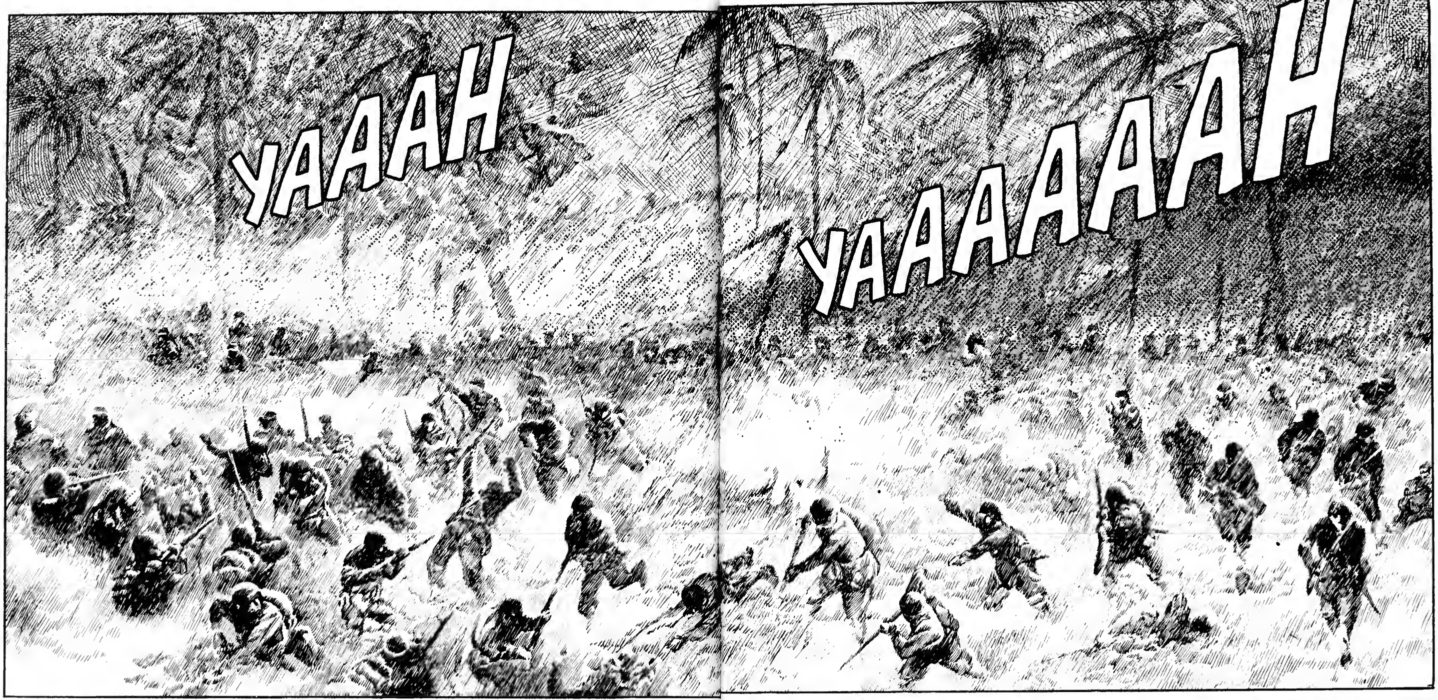
PERHAPS MAJOR TADOKORO, WHO HAD LIVED HIS LIFE LONGING FOR A GLORIOUS DEATH, FORGOT ABOUT THE MEN UNDER HIM. HE DISAPPEARED QUICKLY INTO THE DEEP DARKNESS, HIS MEN SOON LOSING SIGHT OF HIM. BUT HE WAS DEFINITELY LEADING THE CHARGE.

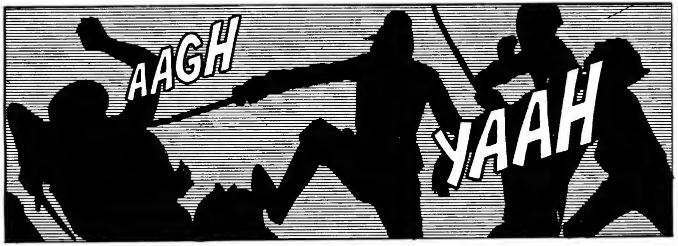


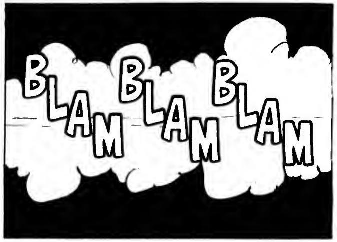


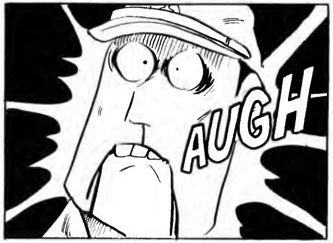

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

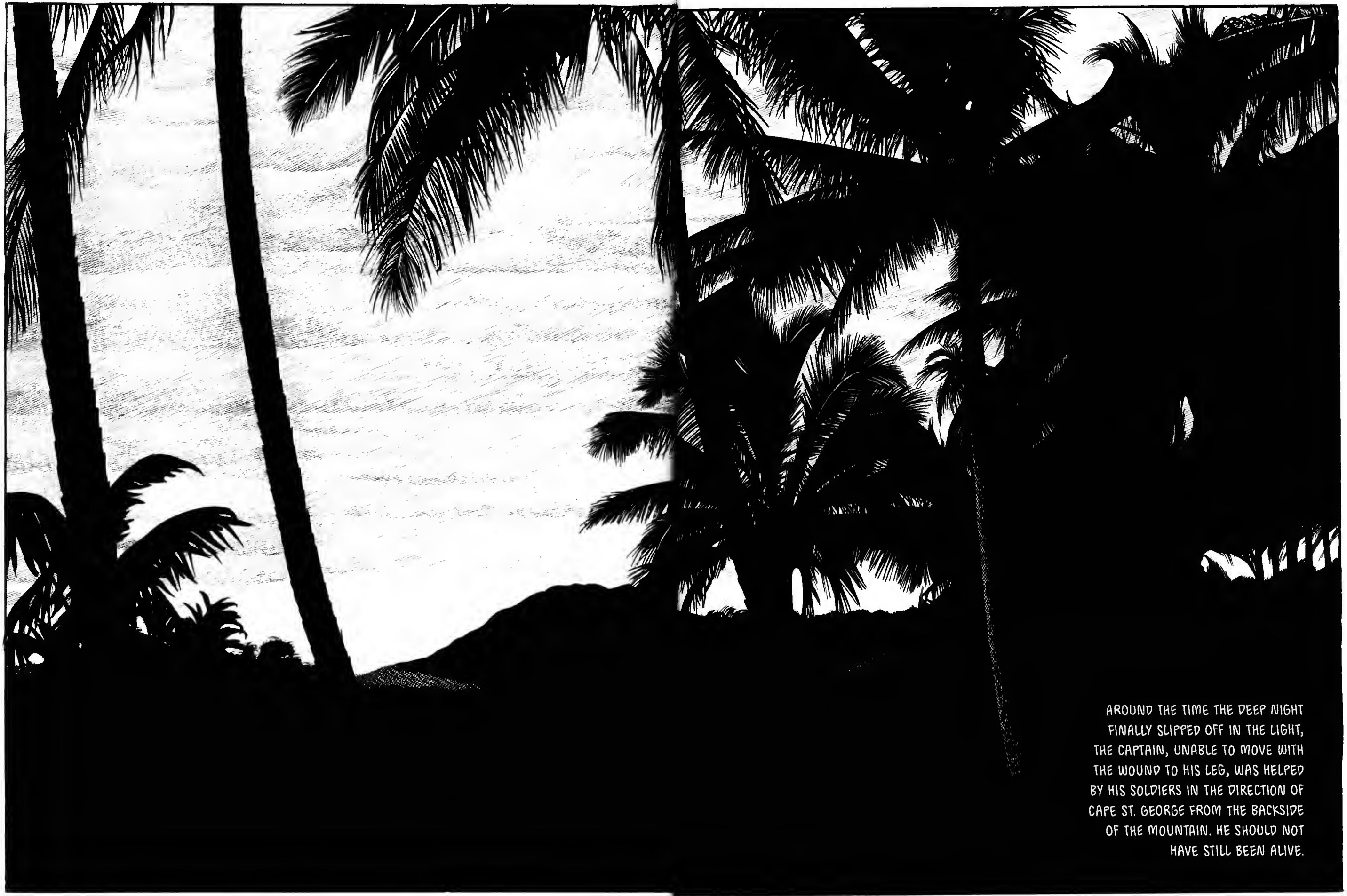

VROOM
RAT A TAT TAT
TAT TAT TAT TAT
mmmm.
AH! CAPTAIN!

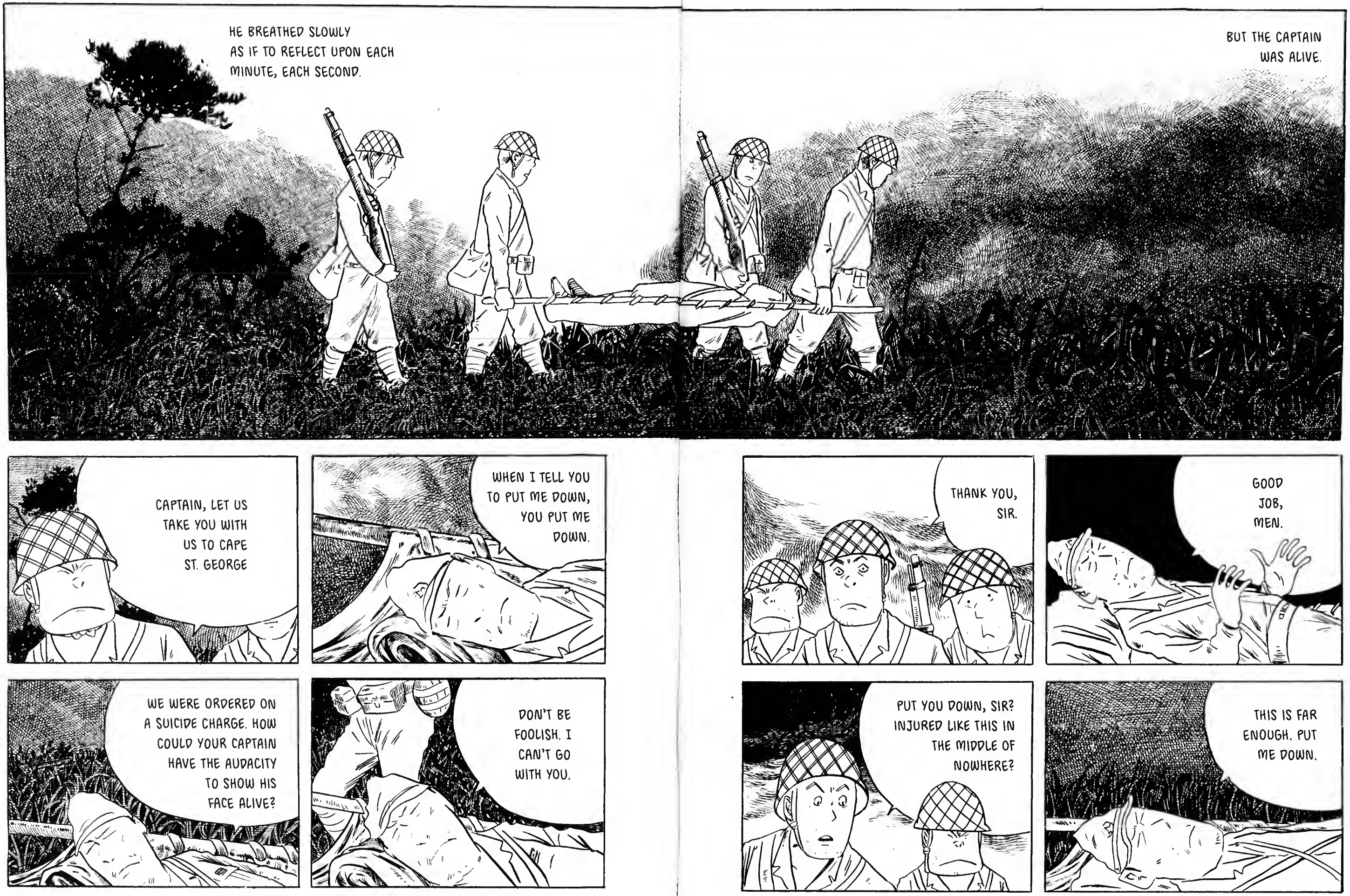

YAAAAAAAH
YAAAH

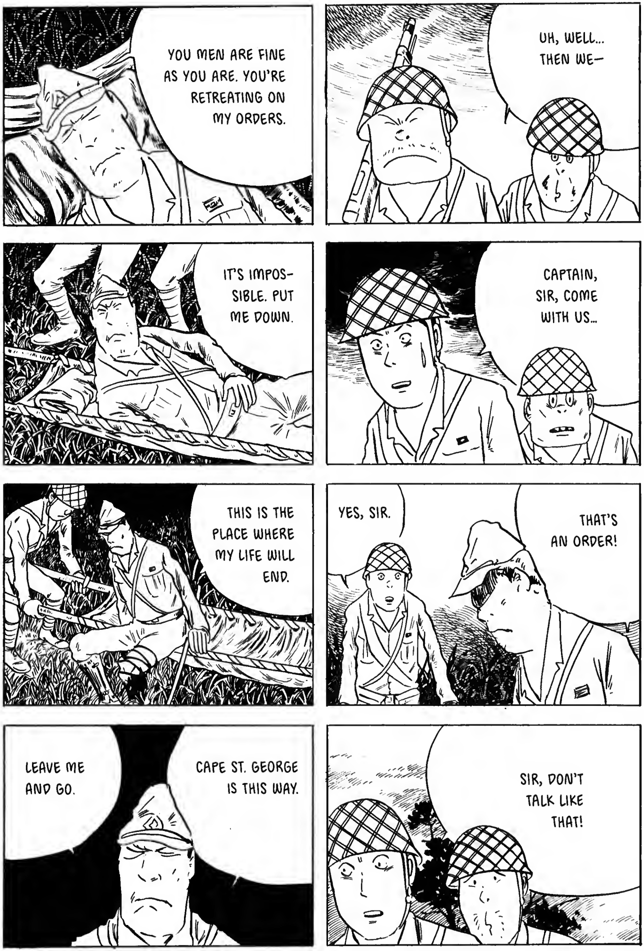

YAAH
AAGH

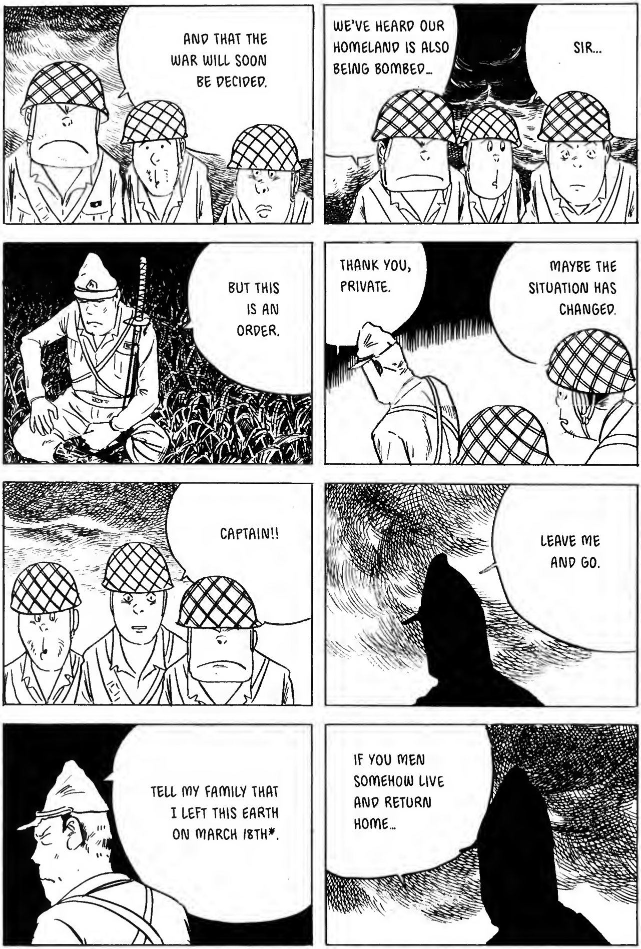

BLAM BLAM BLAM


AUGH

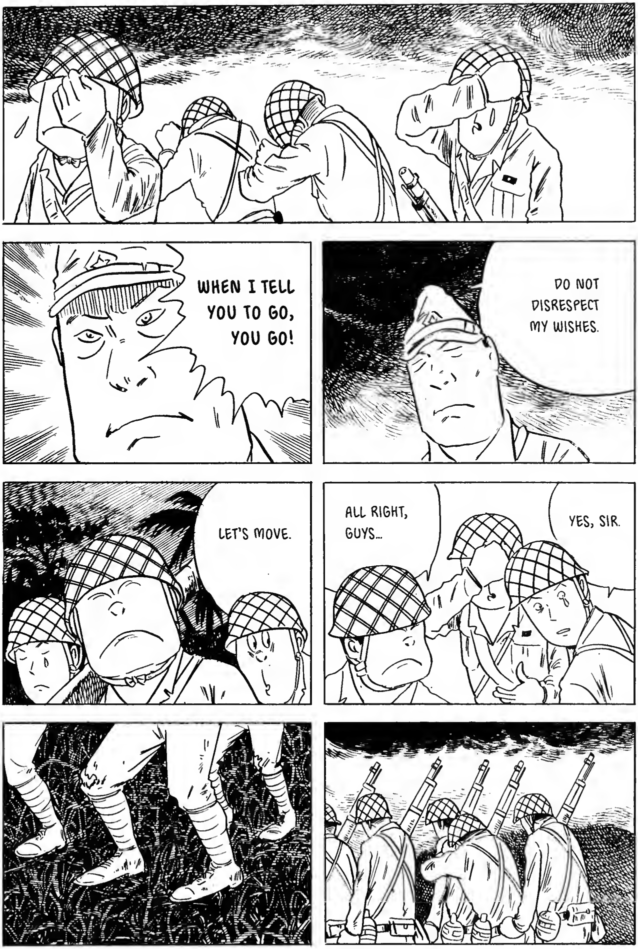

AROUND THE TIME THE DEEP NIGHT FINALLY SLIPPED OFF IN THE LIGHT, THE CAPTAIN, UNABLE TO MOVE WITH THE WOUND TO HIS LEG, WAS HELPED BY HIS SOLDIERS IN THE DIRECTION OF CAPE ST. GEORGE FROM THE BACKSIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN. HE SHOULD NOT HAVE STILL BEEN ALIVE.

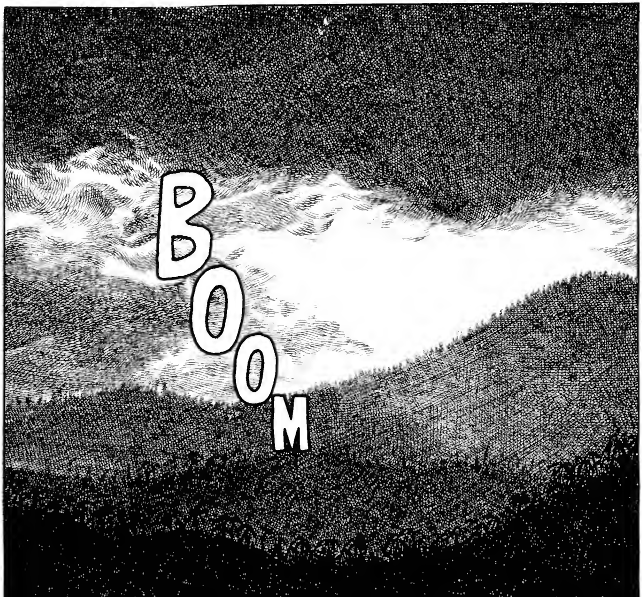

BUT THE CAPTAIN WAS ALIVE.
HE BREATHED SLOWLY AS IF TO REFLECT UPON EACH MINUTE, EACH SECOND.
GOOD JOB, MEN.
THANK YOU, SIR.
THIS IS FAR ENOUGH. PUT ME DOWN.
PUT YOU DOWN, SIR? INJURED LIKE THIS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?
WHEN I TELL YOU TO PUT ME DOWN, YOU PUT ME DOWN.
CAPTAIN, LET US TAKE YOU WITH US TO CAPE ST. GEORGE
DON'T BE FOOLISH. I CAN'T GO WITH YOU.
WE WERE ORDERED ON A SUICIDE CHARGE. HOW COULD YOUR CAPTAIN HAVE THE AUDACITY TO SHOW HIS FACE ALIVE?


YOU MEN ARE FINE AS YOU ARE. YOU'RE RETREATING ON MY ORDERS.
UH, WELL... THEN WE—
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. PUT ME DOWN.
CAPTAIN, SIR, COME WITH US...
THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE MY LIFE WILL END.
YES, SIR.
THAT'S AN ORDER!
LEAVE ME AND GO.
CAPE ST. GEORGE IS THIS WAY.
SIR, DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

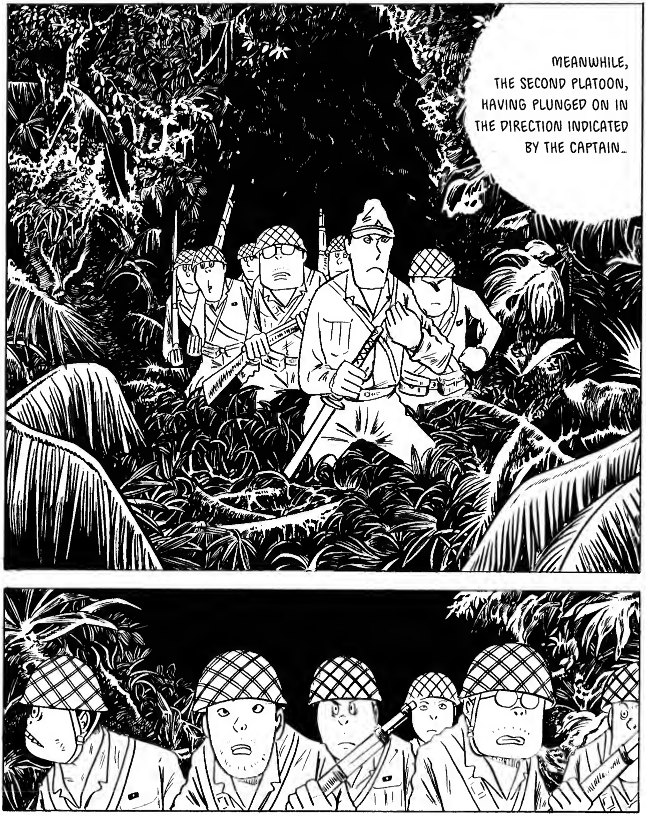

AND THAT THE WAR WILL SOON BE DECIDED.
WE'VE HEARD OUR HOMELAND IS ALSO BEING BOMBED...
SIR...
BUT THIS IS AN ORDER.
THANK YOU, PRIVATE.
MAYBE THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED.
CAPTAIN!!
LEAVE ME AND GO.
TELL MY FAMILY THAT I LEFT THIS EARTH ON MARCH 18TH*.
IF YOU MEN SOMEHOW LIVE AND RETURN HOME...

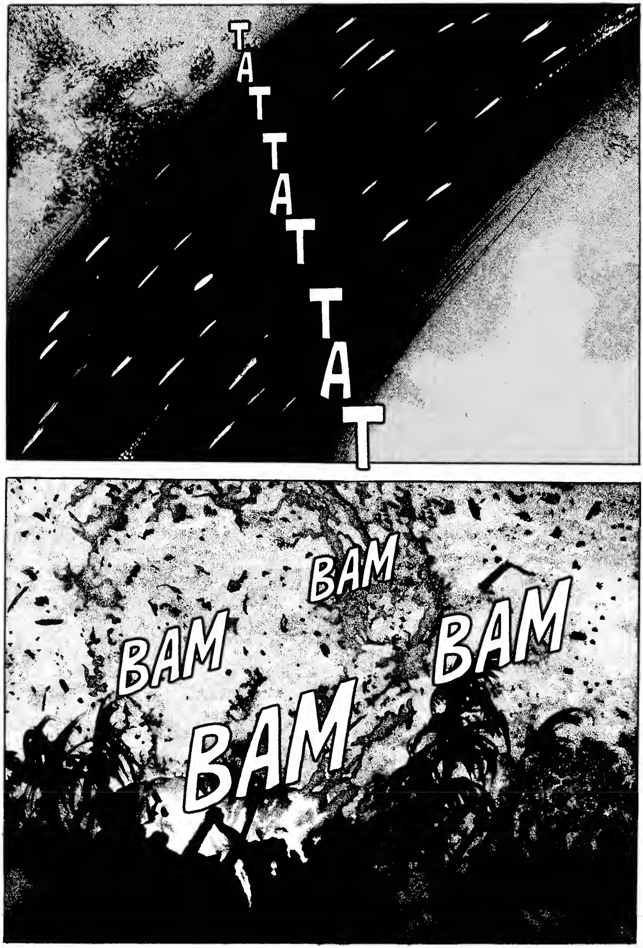
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

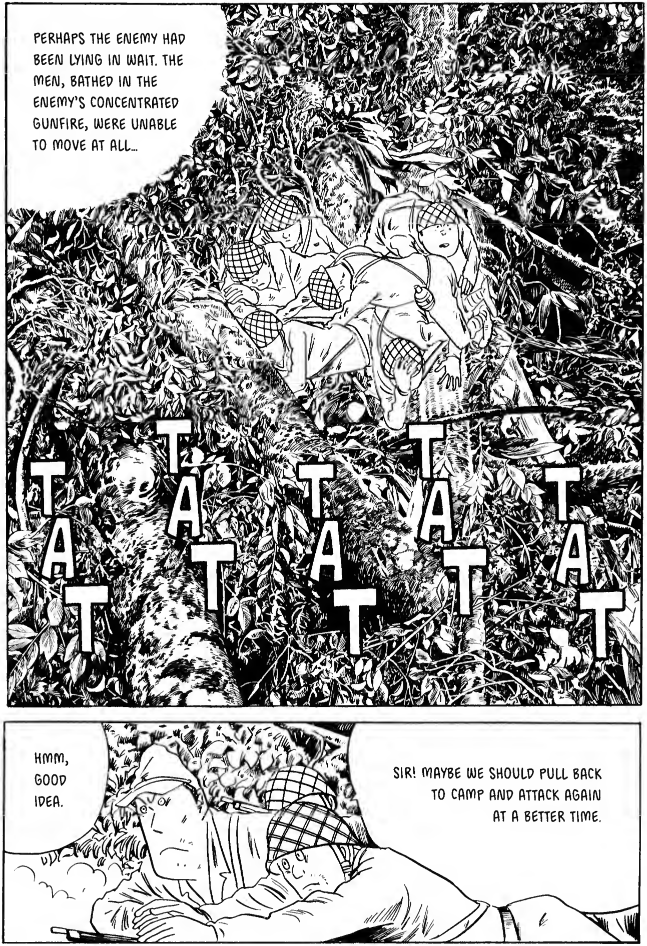

WHEN I TELL YOU TO GO, YOU GO!
DO NOT DISRESPECT MY WISHES.
LET'S MOVE.
ALL RIGHT, GUYS...
YES, SIR.

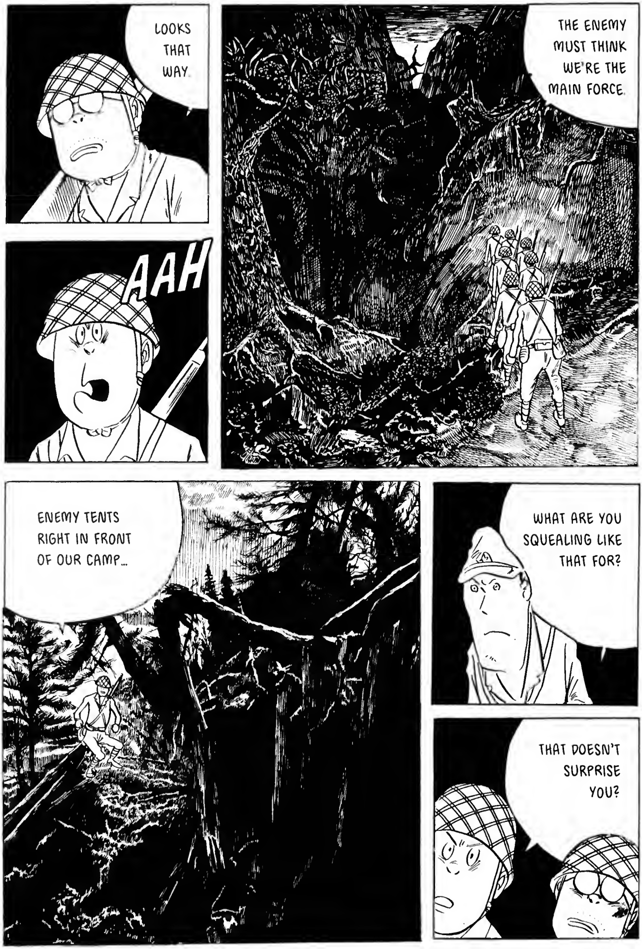

BOOM

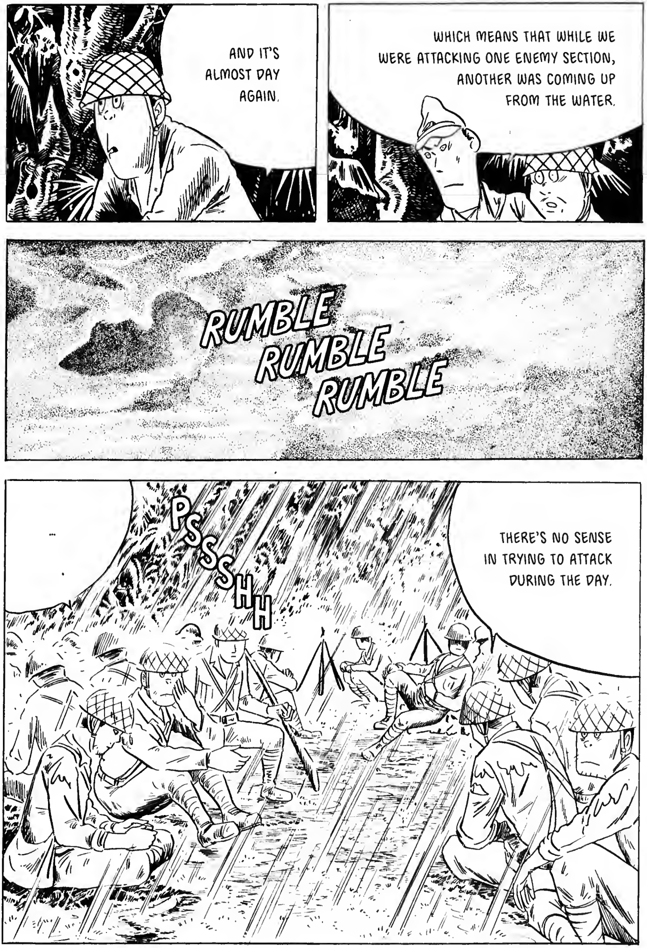
THAT NIGHT

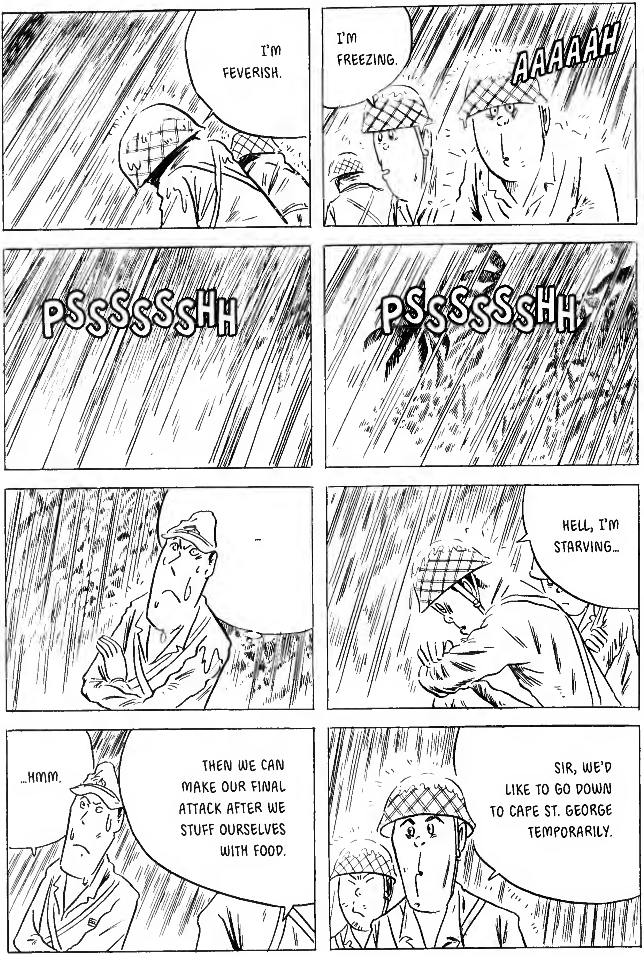

MEANWHILE, THE SECOND PLATOON, HAVING PLUNGED ON IN THE DIRECTION INDICATED BY THE CAPTAIN…

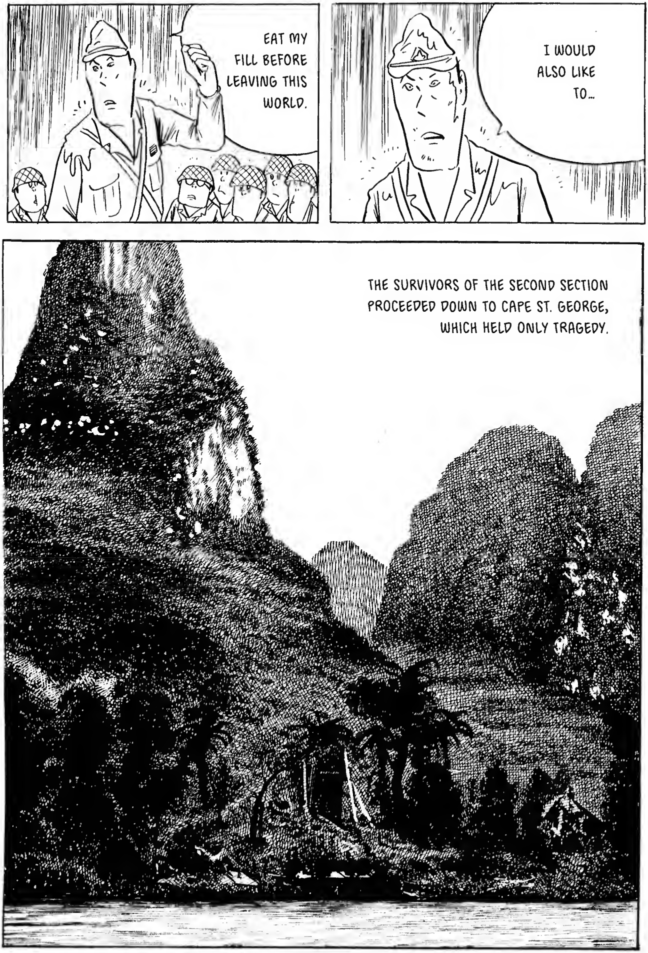

TAT
TAT
TAT
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM

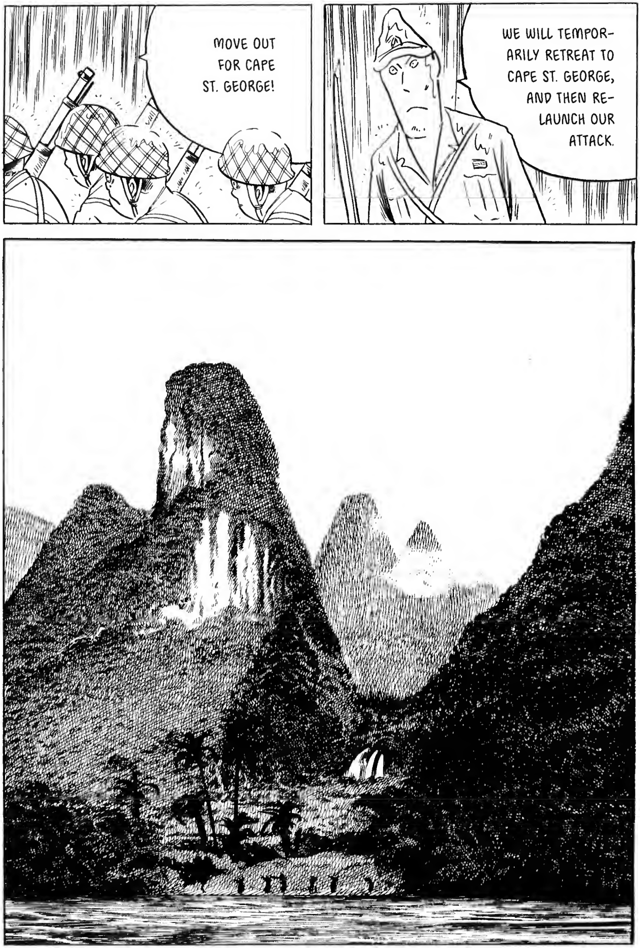

PERHAPS THE ENEMY HAD BEEN LYING IN WAIT. THE MEN, BATHED IN THE ENEMY'S CONCENTRATED GUNFIRE, WERE UNABLE TO MOVE AT ALL...
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT
SIR! MAYBE WE SHOULD PULL BACK TO CAMP AND ATTACK AGAIN AT A BETTER TIME.
HMM, GOOD IDEA.

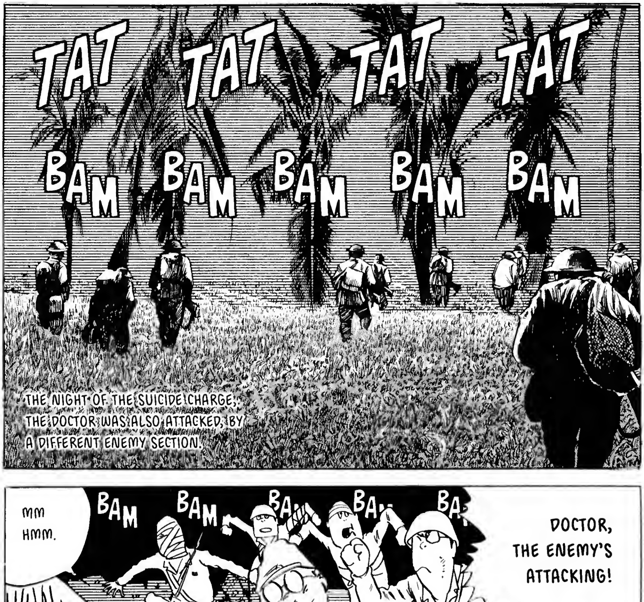

THE ENEMY MUST THINK WE'RE THE MAIN FORCE.
LOOKS THAT WAY.
AAH
WHAT ARE YOU SQUEALING LIKE THAT FOR?
THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE YOU?
ENEMY TENTS RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR CAMP...

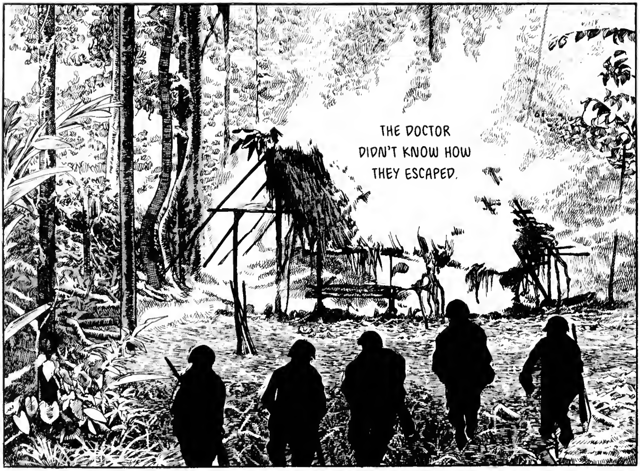

AND IT'S ALMOST DAY AGAIN.
WHICH MEANS THAT WHILE WE WERE ATTACKING ONE ENEMY SECTION, ANOTHER WAS COMING UP FROM THE WATER.
RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE
...
PSSSHH
THERE'S NO SENSE IN TRYING TO ATTACK DURING THE DAY.

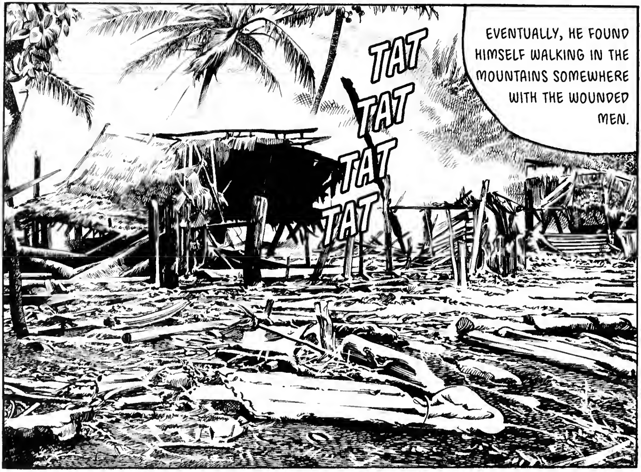

I'M FEVERISH.
I'M FREEZING.
...
AAAAAH
PSSSSSHH
PSSSSSHH
...
HELL, I'M STARVING...
...HMM.
THEN WE CAN MAKE OUR FINAL ATTACK AFTER WE STUFF OURSELVES WITH FOOD.
SIR, WE'D LIKE TO GO DOWN TO CAPE ST. GEORGE TEMPORARILY.

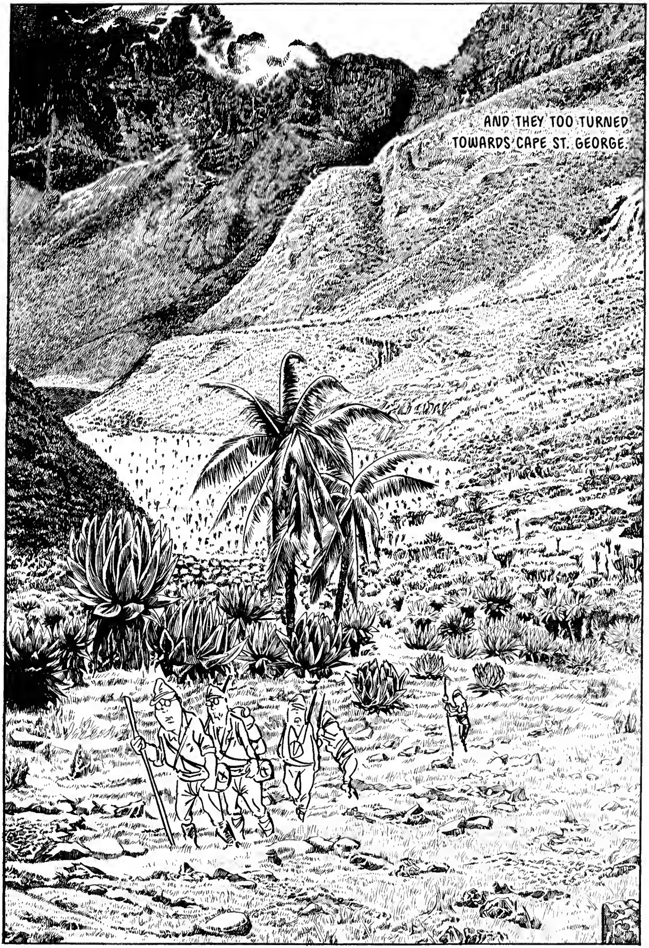

EAT MY FILL BEFORE LEAVING THIS WORLD.
I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO...
THE SURVIVORS OF THE SECOND SECTION PROCEEDED DOWN TO CAPE ST. GEORGE, WHICH HELD ONLY TRAGEDY.

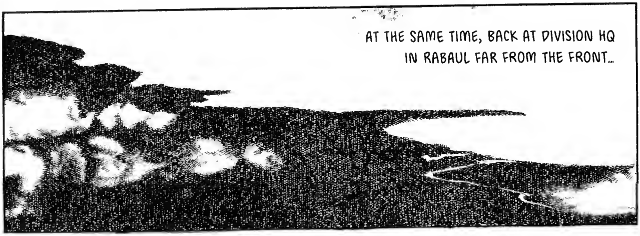

MOVE OUT FOR CAPE ST. GEORGE!
WE WILL TEMPORARILY RETREAT TO CAPE ST. GEORGE, AND THEN RELAUNCH OUR ATTACK.

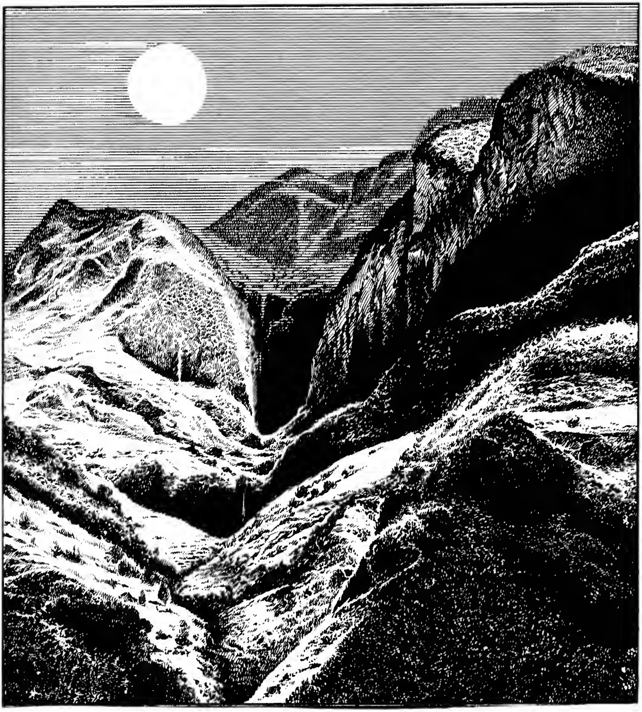

TAT TAT TAT TAT
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM
THE NIGHT OF THE SUICIDE CHARGE, THE DOCTOR WAS ALSO ATTACKED, BY A DIFFERENT ENEMY SECTION.
BAM BAM BA BA BA
DOCTOR, THE ENEMY'S ATTACKING!
MM HMM.

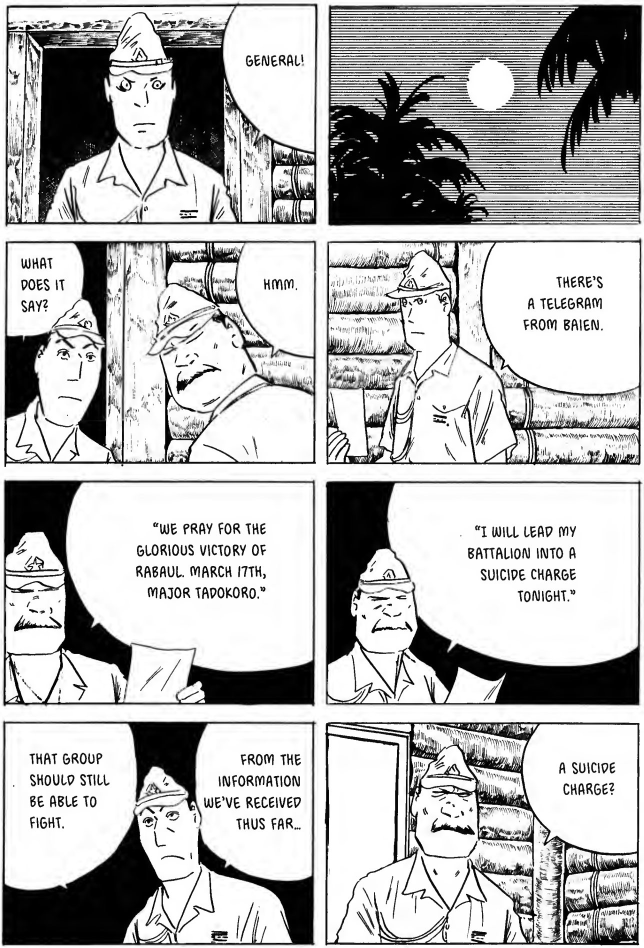

THE DOCTOR DIDN'T KNOW HOW THEY ESCAPED.

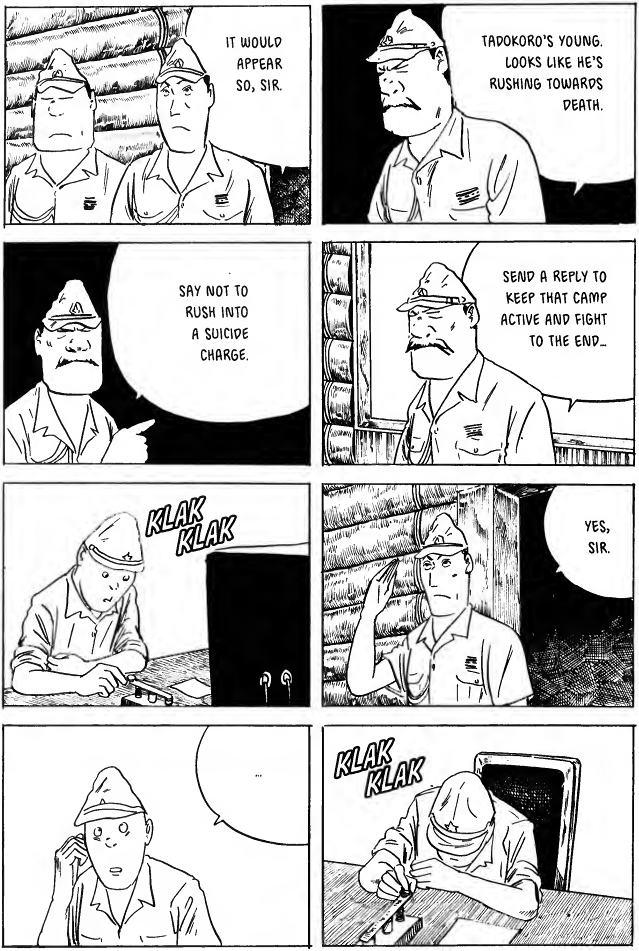

EVENTUALLY, HE FOUND HIMSELF WALKING IN THE MOUNTAINS SOMEWHERE WITH THE WOUNDED MEN.
TAT
TAT
TAT
TAT

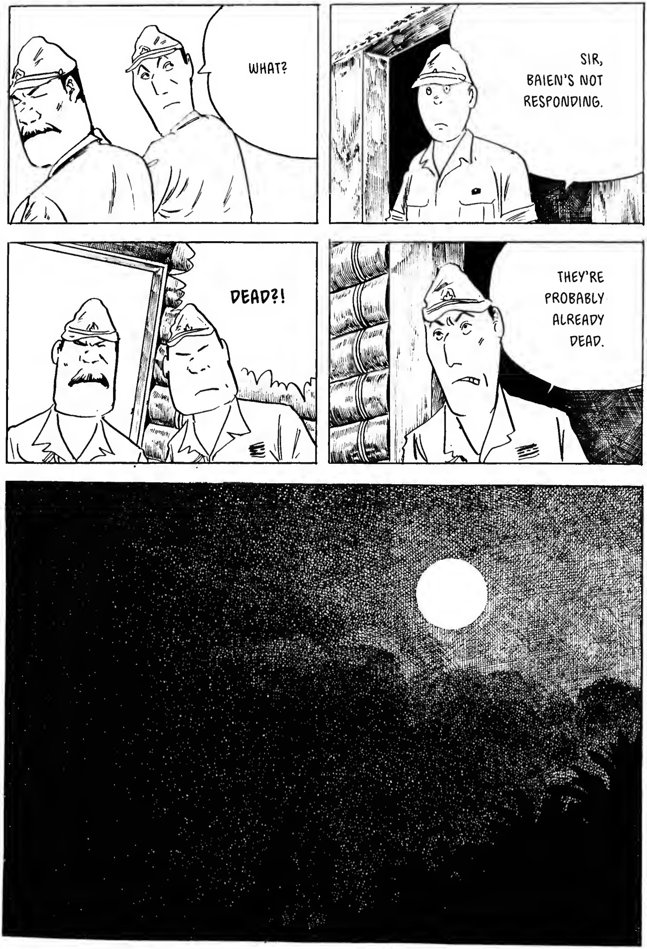

AND THEY TOO TURNED TOWARDS CAPE ST. GEORGE.

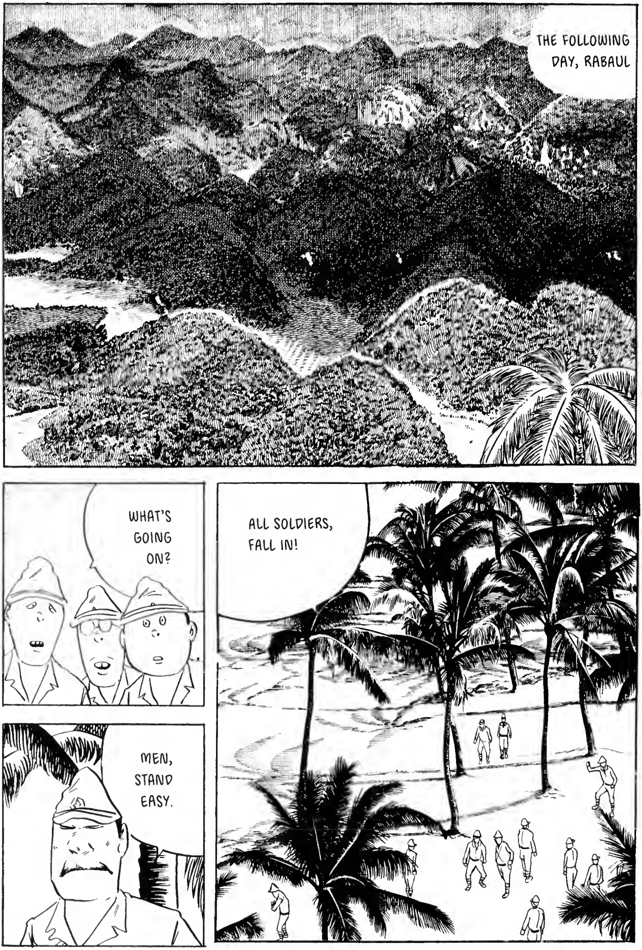

AT THE SAME TIME, BACK AT DIVISION HQ
IN RABAUL FAR FROM THE FRONT...

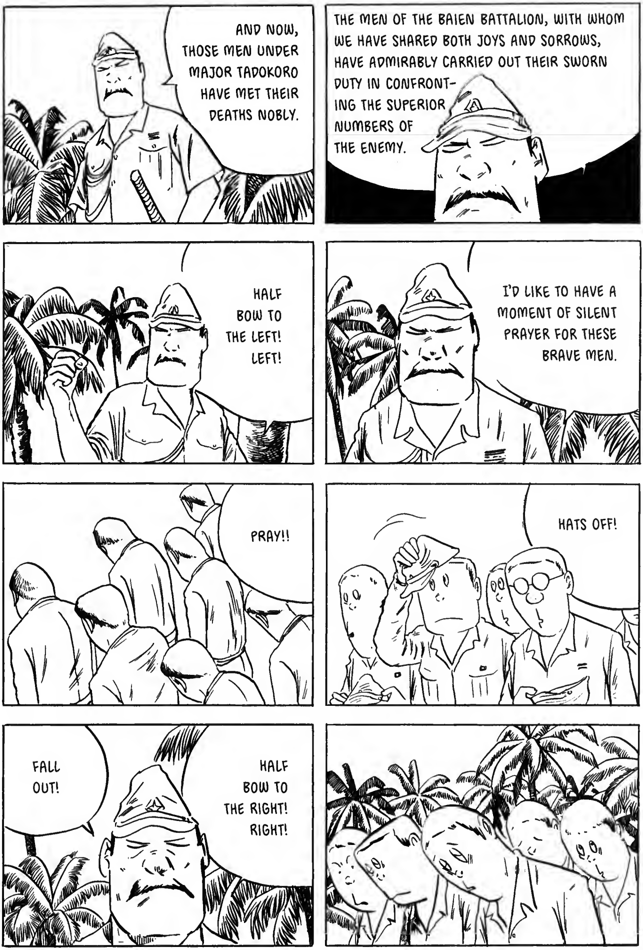


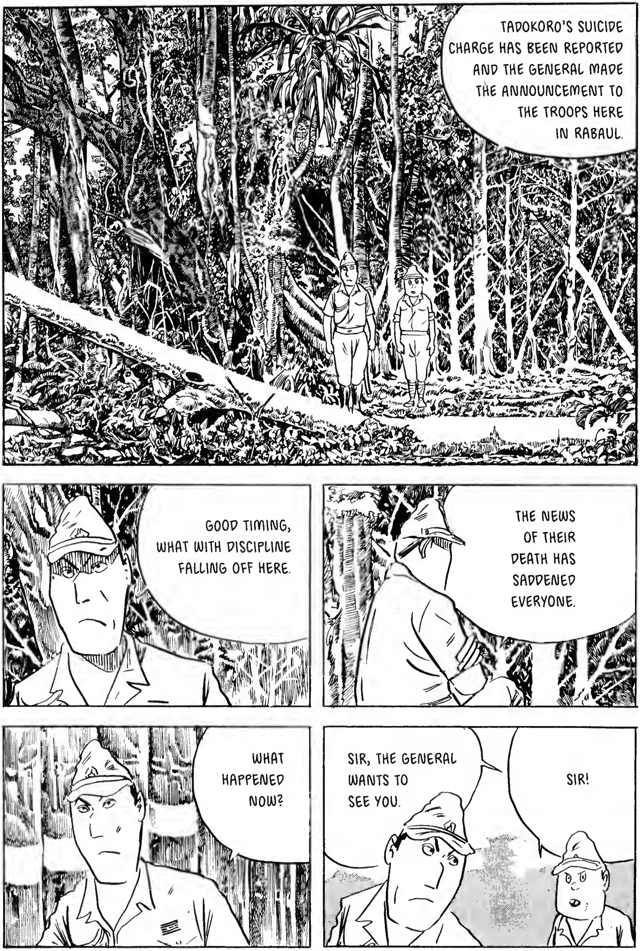

GENERAL!
THERE'S A TELEGRAM FROM BAIEN.
HMM.
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
"I WILL LEAD MY BATTALION INTO A SUICIDE CHARGE TONIGHT."
"WE PRAY FOR THE GLORIOUS VICTORY OF RABAUL. MARCH 17TH, MAJOR TADOKORO."
A SUICIDE CHARGE?
FROM THE INFORMATION WE'VE RECEIVED THUS FAR...
THAT GROUP SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO FIGHT.

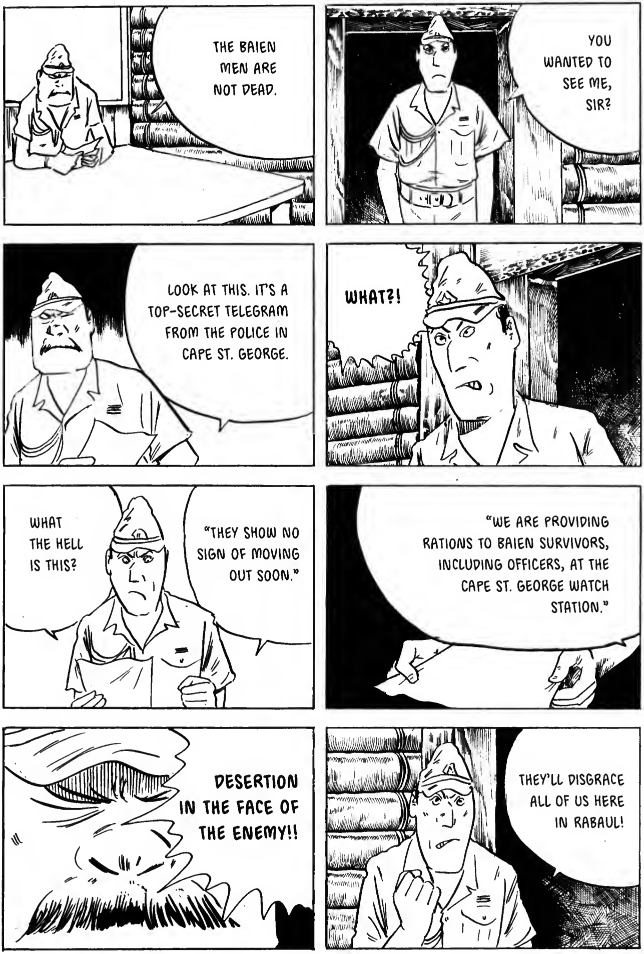

IT WOULD APPEAR SO, SIR.
TADOKORO'S YOUNG. LOOKS LIKE HE'S RUSHING TOWARDS DEATH.
SAY NOT TO RUSH INTO A SUICIDE CHARGE.
SEND A REPLY TO KEEP THAT CAMP ACTIVE AND FIGHT TO THE END...
KLAK KLAK
YES, SIR.
...
KLAK KLAK

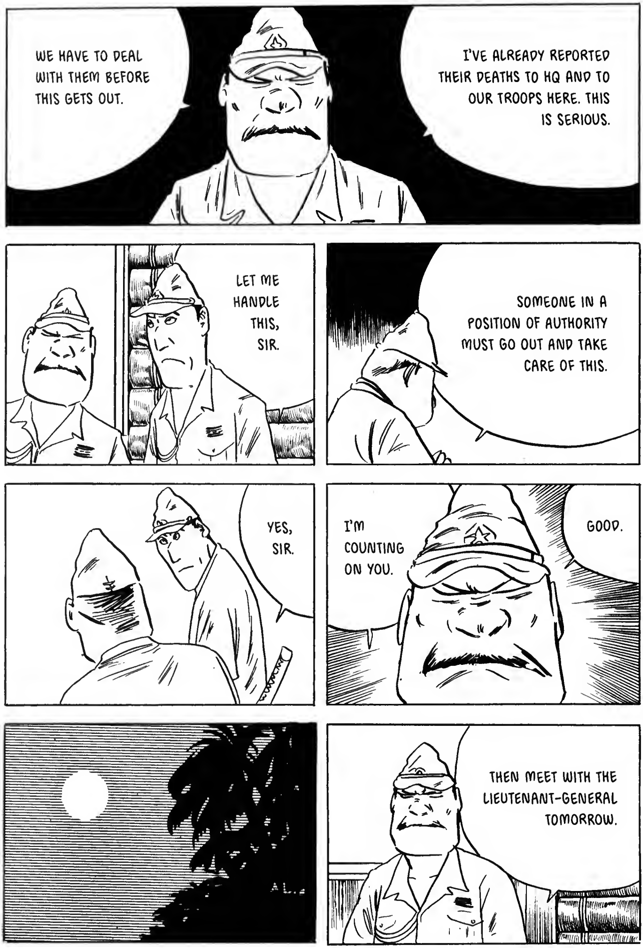

WHAT?
SIR, BAIEN'S NOT RESPONDING.
DEAD?!
THEY'RE PROBABLY ALREADY DEAD.

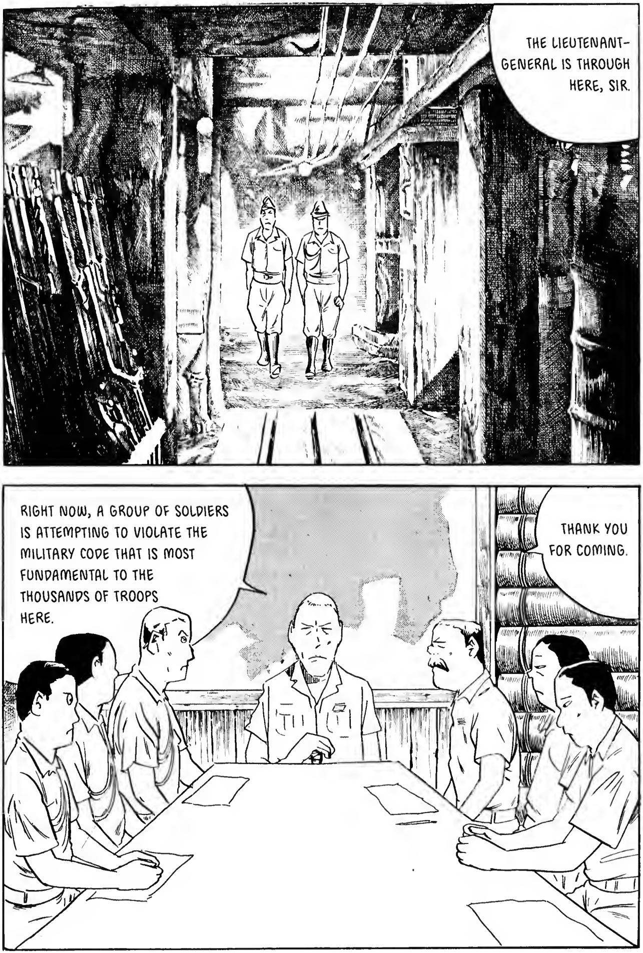

THE FOLLOWING DAY, RABAUL
WHAT'S GOING ON?
ALL SOLDIERS, FALL IN!
MEN, STAND EASY.

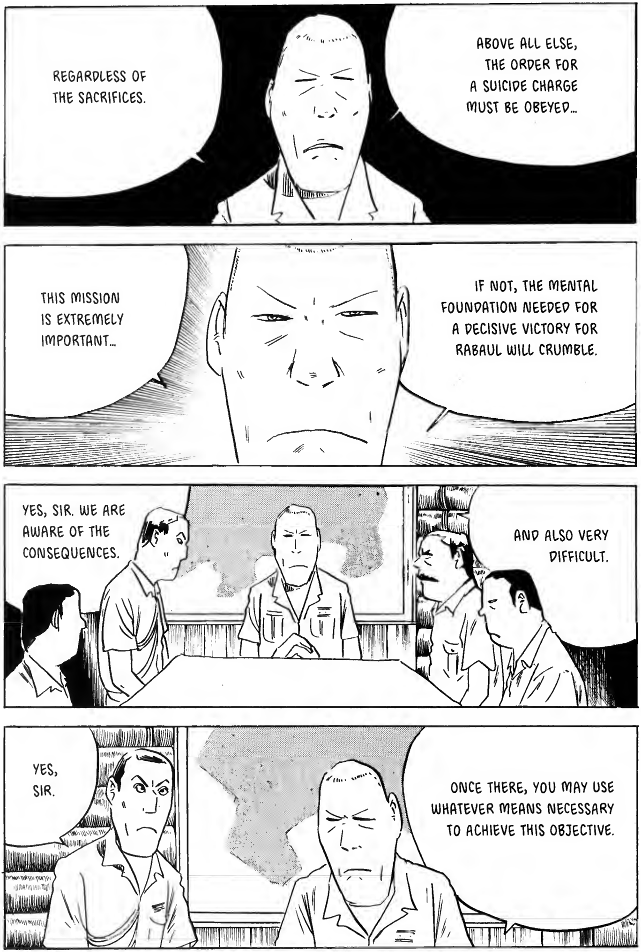

AND NOW, THOSE MEN UNDER MAJOR TADOKORO HAVE MET THEIR DEATHS NOBLY.
THE MEN OF THE BAIEN BATTALION, WITH WHOM WE HAVE SHARED BOTH JOYS AND SORROWS, HAVE ADMIRABLY CARRIED OUT THEIR SWORN DUTY IN CONFRONTING THE SUPERIOR NUMBERS OF THE ENEMY.
HALF BOW TO THE LEFT! LEFT!
I'D LIKE TO HAVE A MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER FOR THESE BRAVE MEN.
PRAY!!
HATS OFF!
FALL OUT!
HALF BOW TO THE RIGHT! RIGHT!

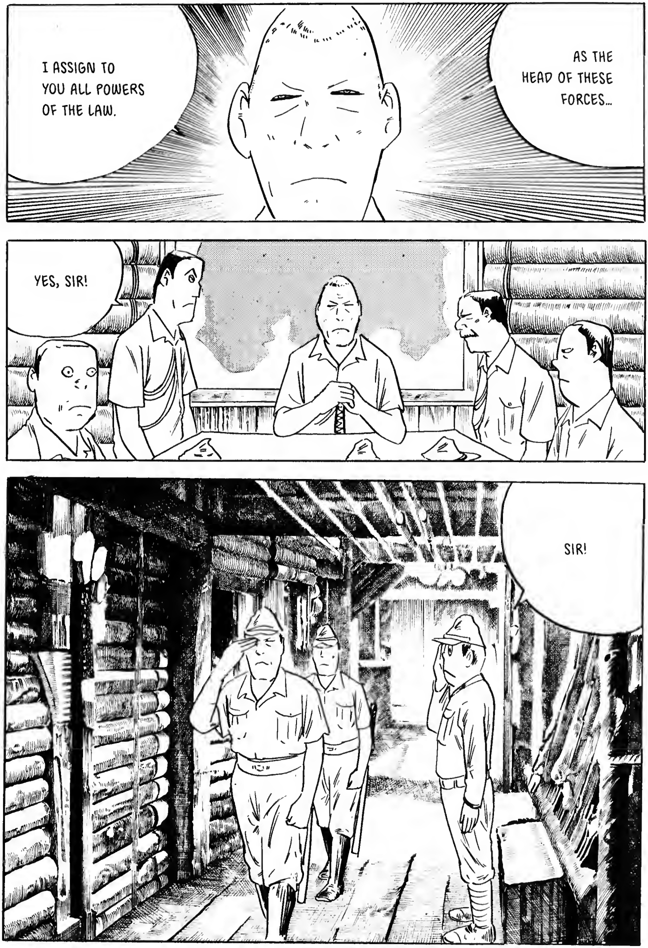

TADOKORO'S SUICIDE CHARGE HAS BEEN REPORTED AND THE GENERAL MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE TROOPS HERE IN RABAUL.
GOOD TIMING, WHAT WITH DISCIPLINE FALLING OFF HERE.
THE NEWS OF THEIR DEATH HAS SADDENED EVERYONE.
WHAT HAPPENED NOW?
SIR, THE GENERAL WANTS TO SEE YOU.
SIR!


THE BAIEN MEN ARE NOT DEAD.
YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?
LOOK AT THIS. IT'S A TOP-SECRET TELEGRAM FROM THE POLICE IN CAPE ST. GEORGE.
WHAT?!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
"THEY SHOW NO SIGN OF MOVING OUT SOON."
"WE ARE PROVIDING RATIONS TO BAIEN SURVIVORS, INCLUDING OFFICERS, AT THE CAPE ST. GEORGE WATCH STATION."
DESERTION IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY!!
THEY'LL DISGRACE ALL OF US HERE IN RABAUL!

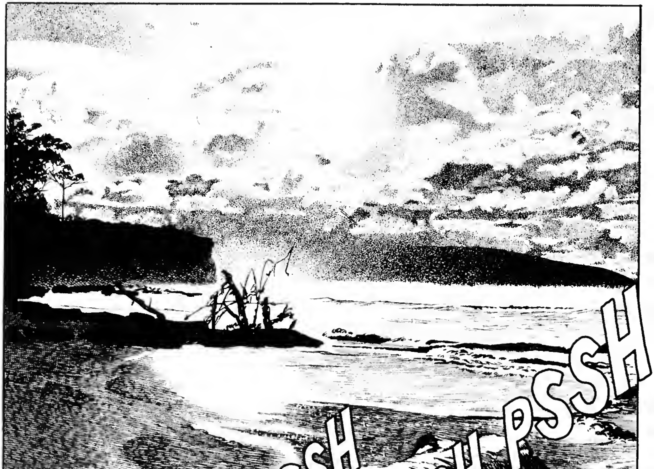

I'VE ALREADY REPORTED THEIR DEATHS TO HQ AND TO OUR TROOPS HERE. THIS IS SERIOUS.
WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THEM BEFORE THIS GETS OUT.
LET ME HANDLE THIS, SIR.
SOMEONE IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY MUST GO OUT AND TAKE CARE OF THIS.
YES, SIR.
GOOD.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
THEN MEET WITH THE LIEUTENANT-GENERAL TOMORROW.

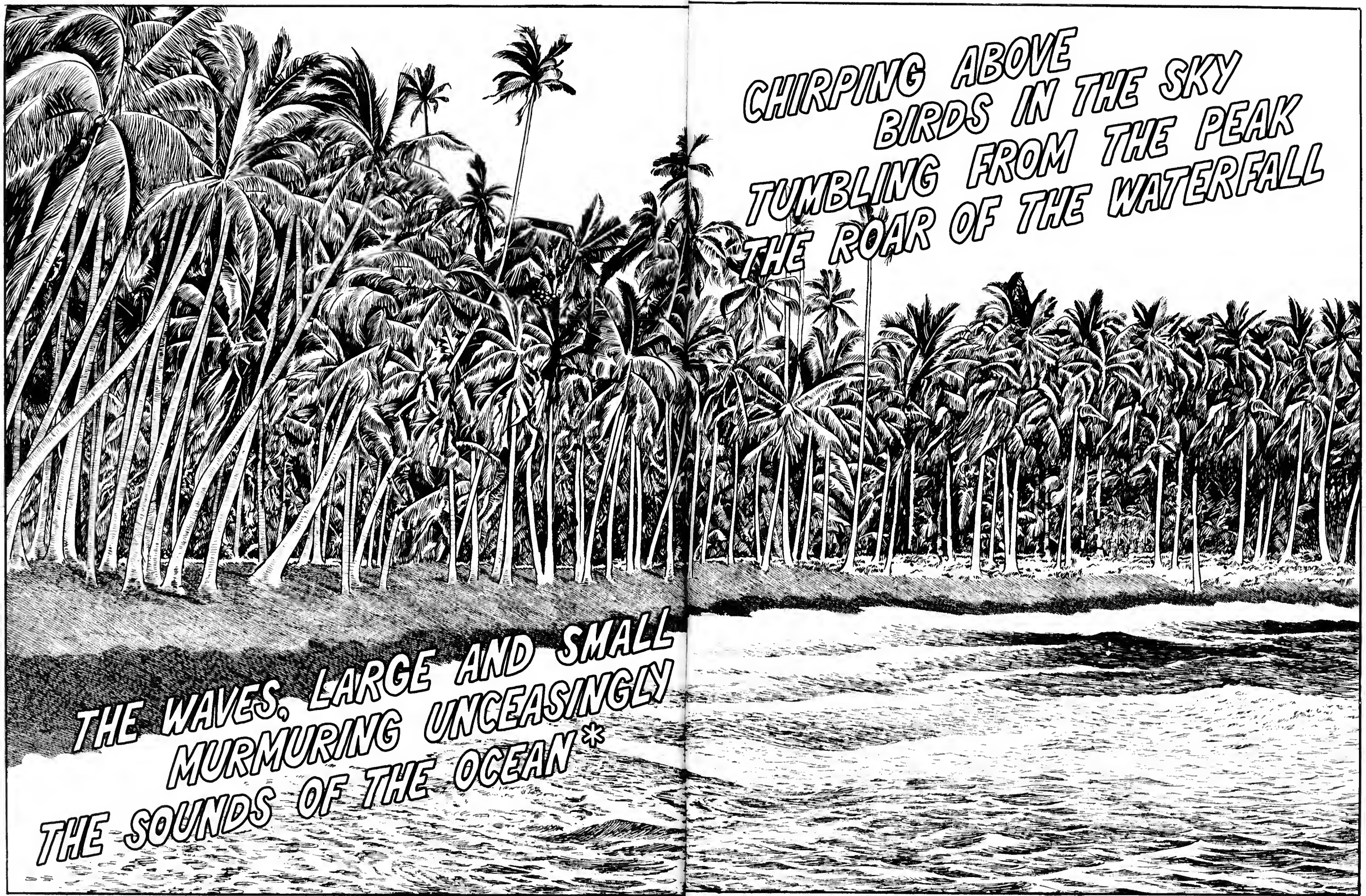

THE LIEUTENANT-GENERAL IS THROUGH HERE, SIR.
RIGHT NOW, A GROUP OF SOLDIERS IS ATTEMPTING TO VIOLATE THE MILITARY CODE THAT IS MOST FUNDAMENTAL TO THE THOUSANDS OF TROOPS HERE.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.


ABOVE ALL ELSE, THE ORDER FOR A SUICIDE CHARGE MUST BE OBEYED...
REGARDLESS OF THE SACRIFICES.
IF NOT, THE MENTAL FOUNDATION NEEDED FOR A DECISIVE VICTORY FOR RABAUL WILL CRUMBLE.
THIS MISSION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT...
AND ALSO VERY DIFFICULT.
YES, SIR. WE ARE AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES.
ONCE THERE, YOU MAY USE WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE.
YES, SIR.


AS THE HEAD OF THESE FORCES...
I ASSIGN TO YOU ALL POWERS OF THE LAW.
YES, SIR!
SIR!

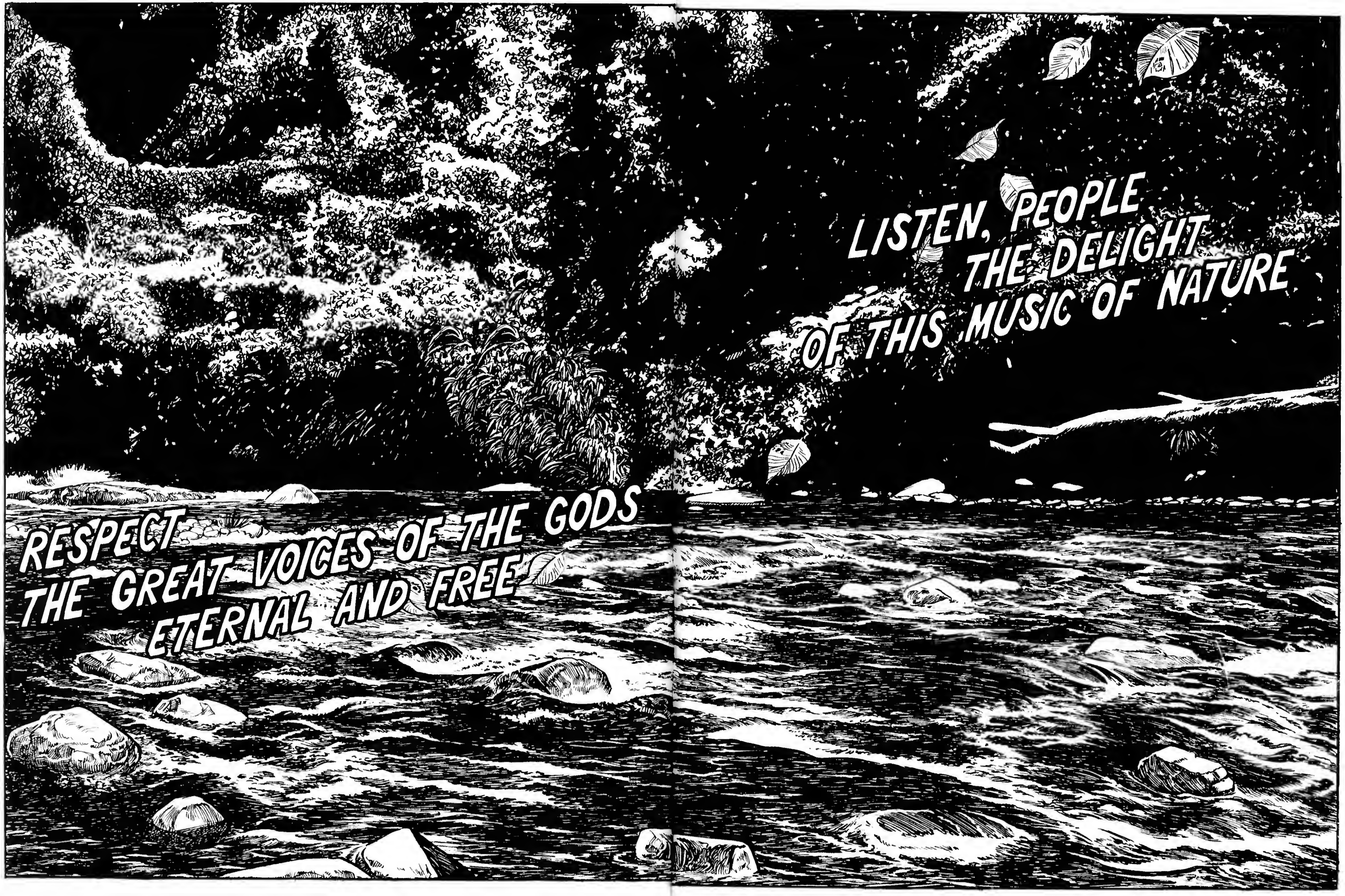
CAPE ST. GEORGE

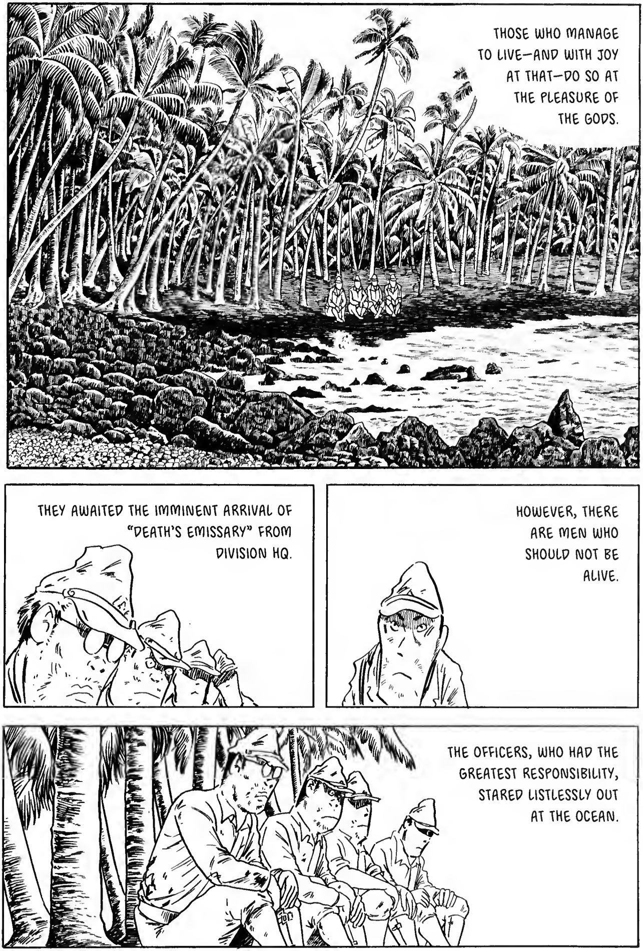

PSSH PSSH
PSSH PSSH PSSH

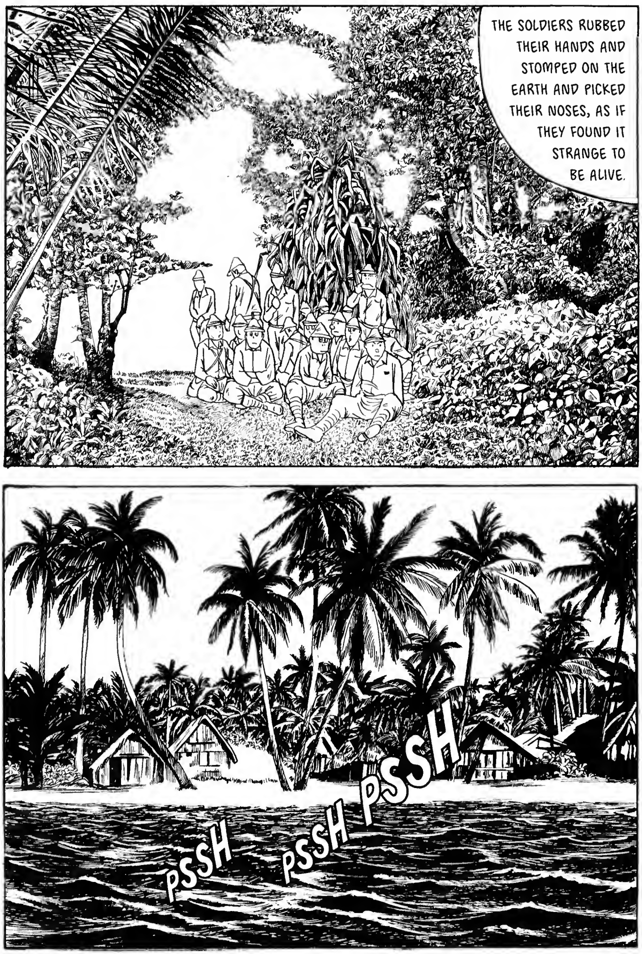

CHIRPING ABOVE
BIRDS IN THE SKY
TUMBLING FROM THE PEAK
THE ROAR OF THE WATERFALL
THE WAVES, LARGE AND SMALL
MURMURING UNCEASINGLY
THE SOUNDS OF THE OCEAN*

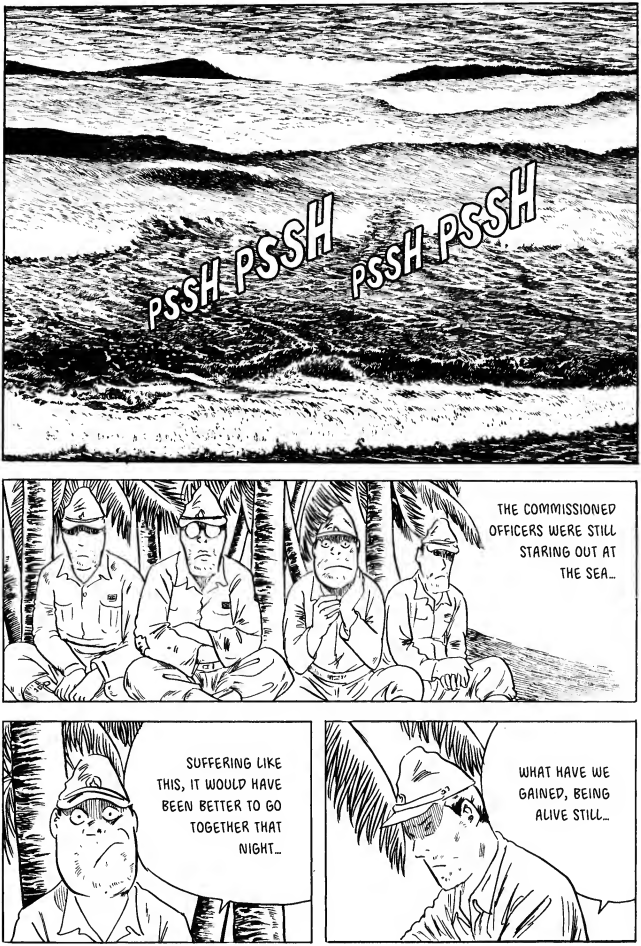
---

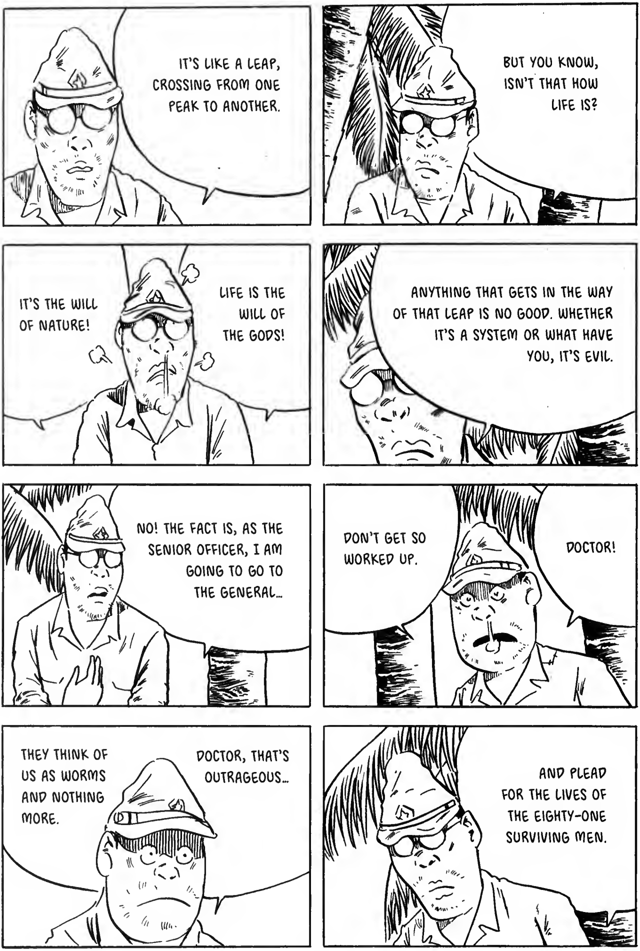
*SET TO A WALTZ TEMPO, "UTSUKUSHI TENNEN (BEAUTIFUL NATURE)" WAS WRITTEN FOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS TO HUM.

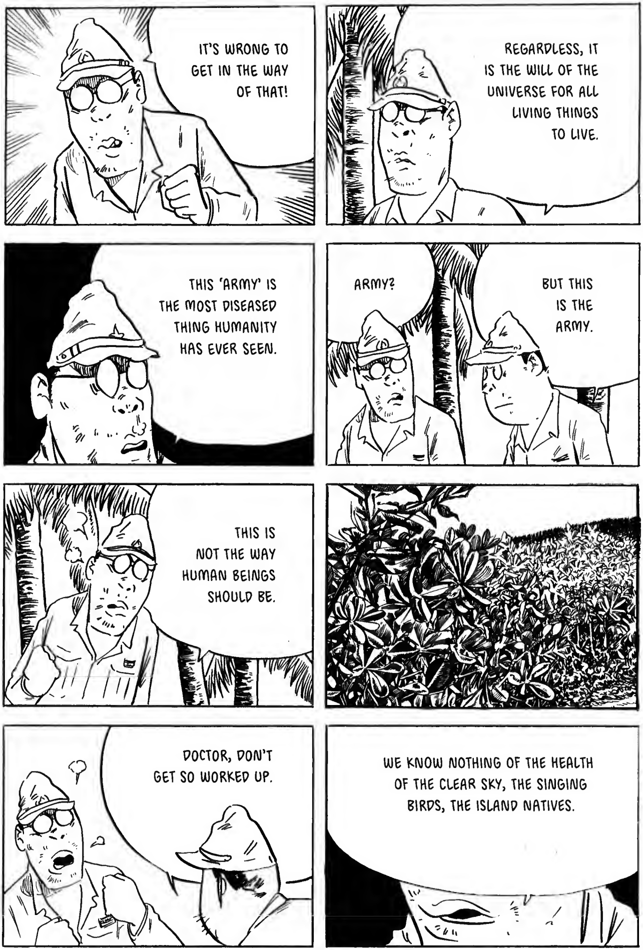

LISTEN, PEOPLE
THE DELIGHT
OF THIS MUSIC OF NATURE
RESPECT
THE GREAT VOICES OF THE GODS
ETERNAL AND FREE

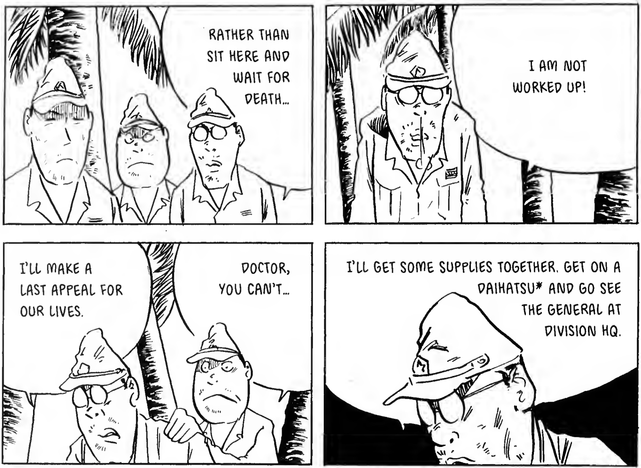

THOSE WHO MANAGE TO LIVE—AND WITH JOY AT THAT—DO SO AT THE PLEASURE OF THE GODS.
THEY AWAITED THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF "DEATH'S EMISSARY" FROM DIVISION HQ.
HOWEVER, THERE ARE MEN WHO SHOULD NOT BE ALIVE.
THE OFFICERS, WHO HAD THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY, STARED LISTLESSLY OUT AT THE OCEAN.


THE SOLDIERS RUBBED THEIR HANDS AND STOMPED ON THE EARTH AND PICKED THEIR NOSES, AS IF THEY FOUND IT STRANGE TO BE ALIVE.
PSSH
PSSH
PSSH
PSSH

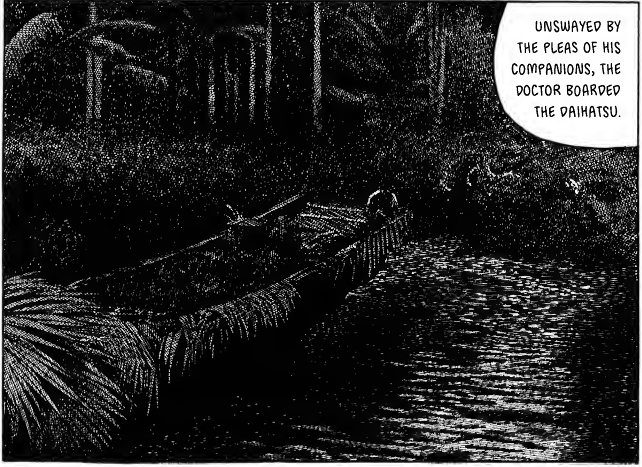

PSSH PSSH
PSSH PSSH
THE COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WERE STILL STARING OUT AT THE SEA...
SUFFERING LIKE THIS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO GO TOGETHER THAT NIGHT...
WHAT HAVE WE GAINED, BEING ALIVE STILL...

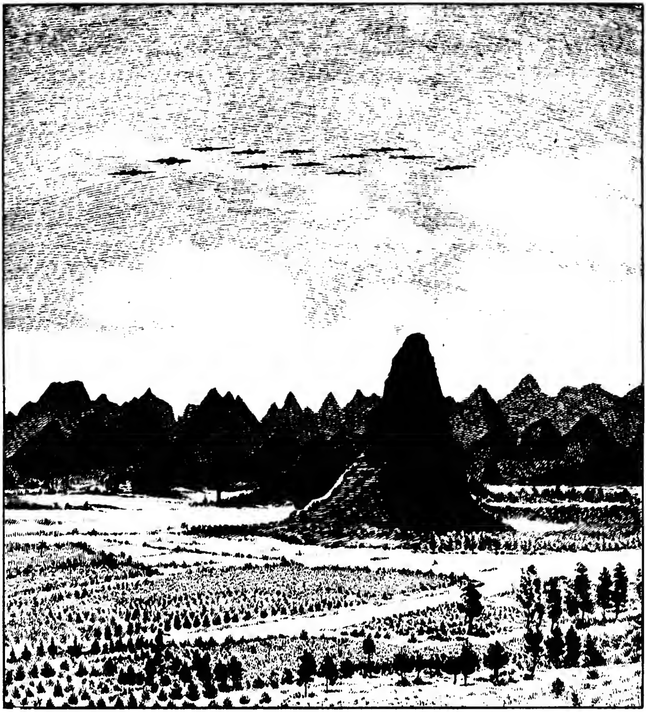

IT'S LIKE A LEAP, CROSSING FROM ONE PEAK TO ANOTHER.
BUT YOU KNOW, ISN'T THAT HOW LIFE IS?
IT'S THE WILL OF NATURE!
LIFE IS THE WILL OF THE GODS!
ANYTHING THAT GETS IN THE WAY OF THAT LEAP IS NO GOOD. WHETHER IT'S A SYSTEM OR WHAT HAVE YOU, IT'S EVIL.
NO! THE FACT IS, AS THE SENIOR OFFICER, I AM GOING TO GO TO THE GENERAL...
DON'T GET SO WORKED UP.
DOCTOR!
THEY THINK OF US AS WORMS AND NOTHING MORE.
DOCTOR, THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS...
AND PLEAD FOR THE LIVES OF THE EIGHTY-ONE SURVIVING MEN.

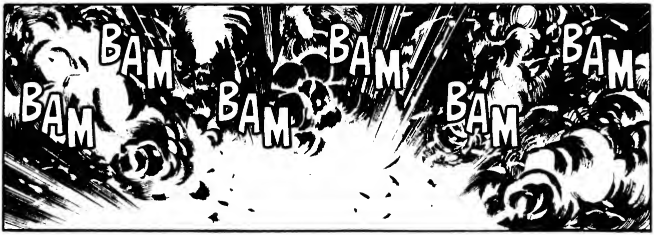

IT'S WRONG TO GET IN THE WAY OF THAT!
REGARDLESS, IT IS THE WILL OF THE UNIVERSE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS TO LIVE.
THIS 'ARMY' IS THE MOST DISEASED THING HUMANITY HAS EVER SEEN.
ARMY?
BUT THIS IS THE ARMY.
THIS IS NOT THE WAY HUMAN BEINGS SHOULD BE.
DOCTOR, DON'T GET SO WORKED UP.
WE KNOW NOTHING OF THE HEALTH OF THE CLEAR SKY, THE SINGING BIRDS, THE ISLAND NATIVES.

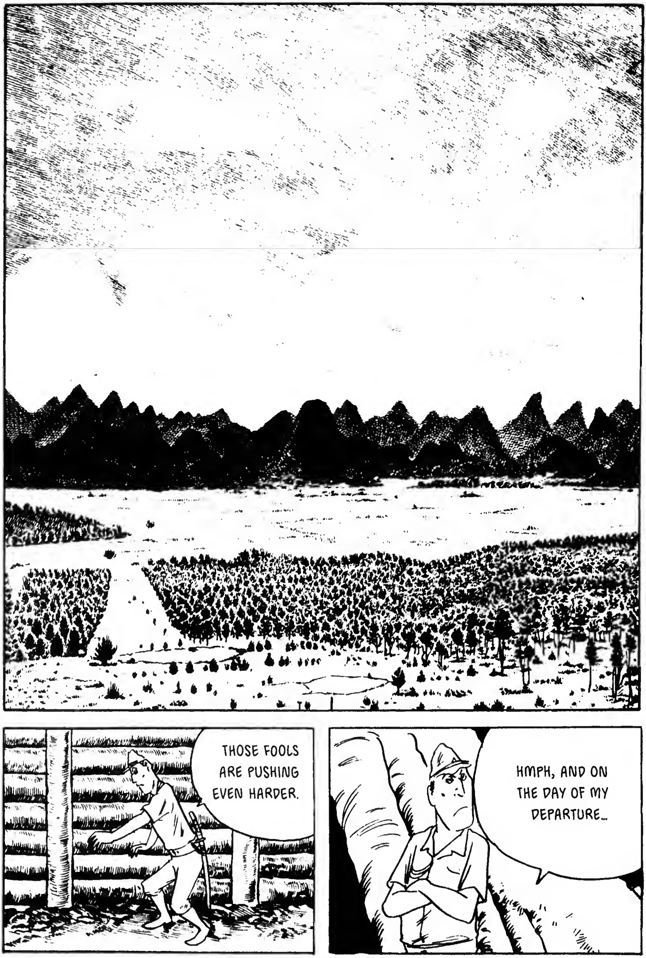

RATHER THAN SIT HERE AND WAIT FOR DEATH...
I AM NOT WORKED UP!
DOCTOR, YOU CAN'T...
I'LL MAKE A LAST APPEAL FOR OUR LIVES.
I'LL GET SOME SUPPLIES TOGETHER, GET ON A DAIHATSU* AND GO SEE THE GENERAL AT DIVISION HQ.

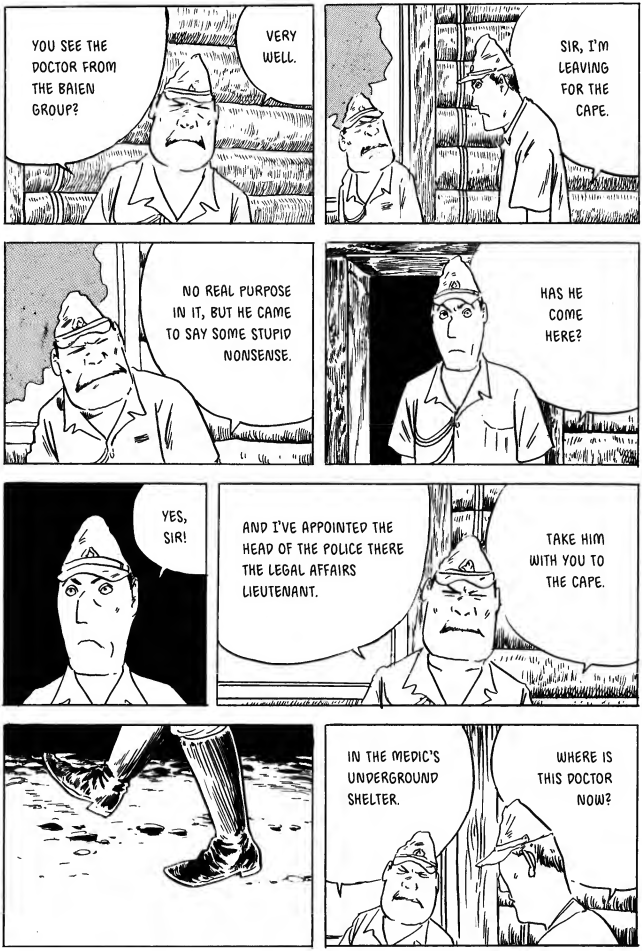
*A SHALLOW, BOXY BOAT USED BY THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL NAVY DURING WWII.

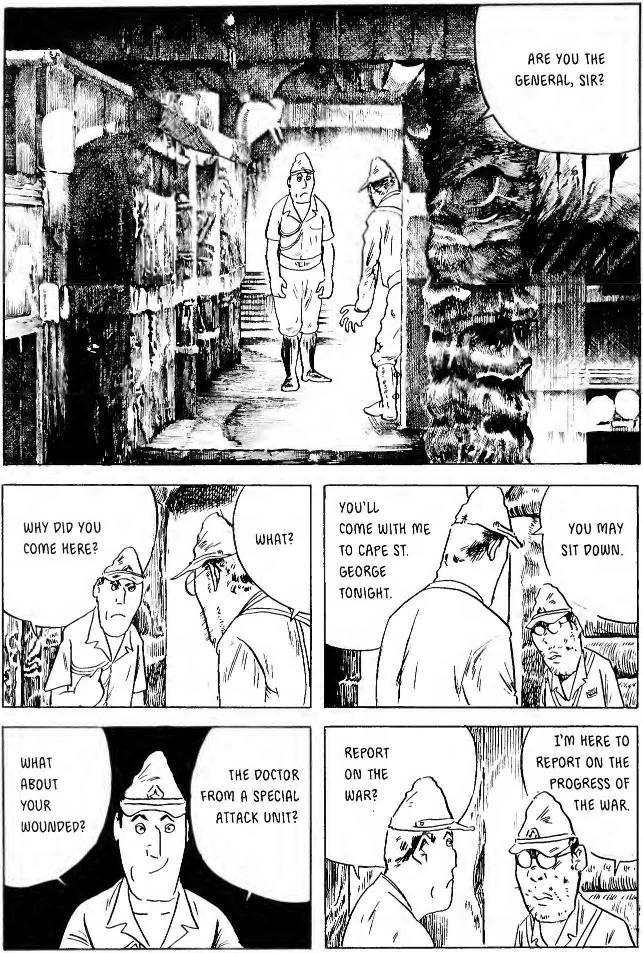

UNSWAYED BY THE PLEAS OF HIS COMPANIONS, THE DOCTOR BOARDED THE DAIHATSU.

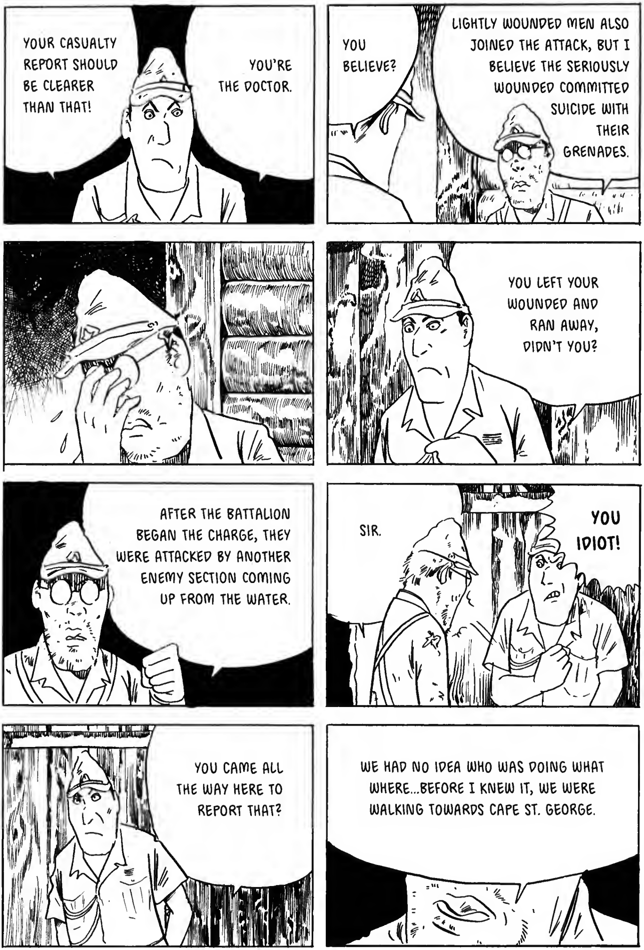


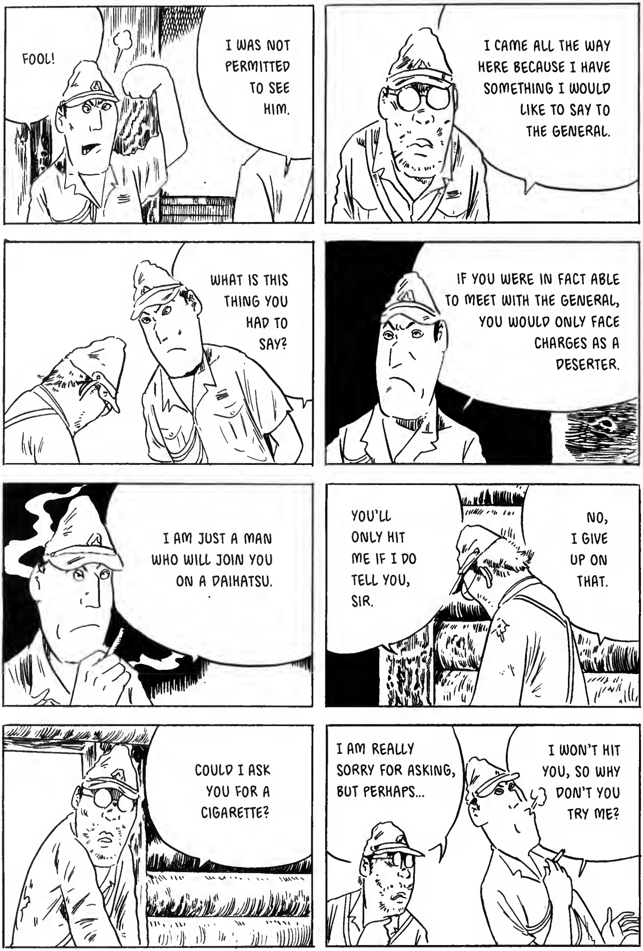

BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM

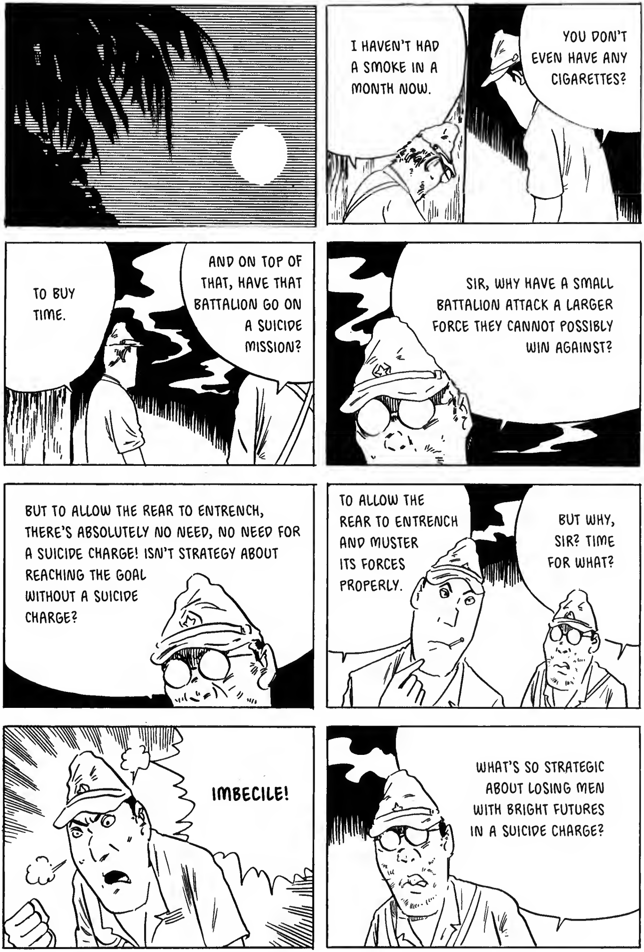

THOSE FOOLS ARE PUSHING EVEN HARDER.
HMPH, AND ON THE DAY OF MY DEPARTURE...

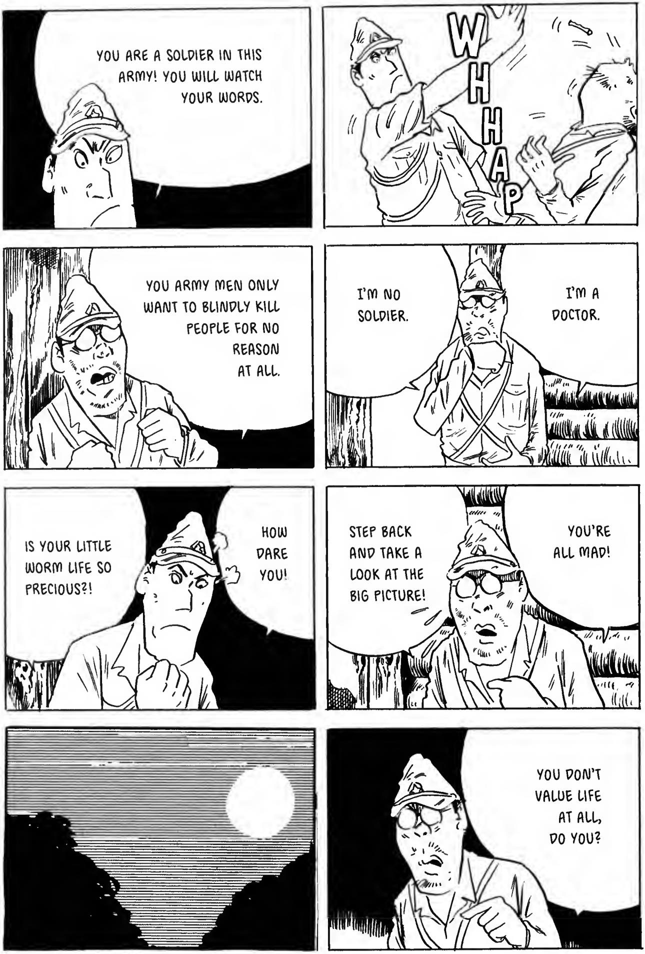

YOU SEE THE DOCTOR FROM THE BAIEN GROUP?
VERY WELL.
SIR, I'M LEAVING FOR THE CAPE.
NO REAL PURPOSE IN IT, BUT HE CAME TO SAY SOME STUPID NONSENSE.
HAS HE COME HERE?
YES, SIR!
AND I'VE APPOINTED THE HEAD OF THE POLICE THERE THE LEGAL AFFAIRS LIEUTENANT.
TAKE HIM WITH YOU TO THE CAPE.
WHERE IS THIS DOCTOR NOW?
IN THE MEDIC'S UNDERGROUND SHELTER.

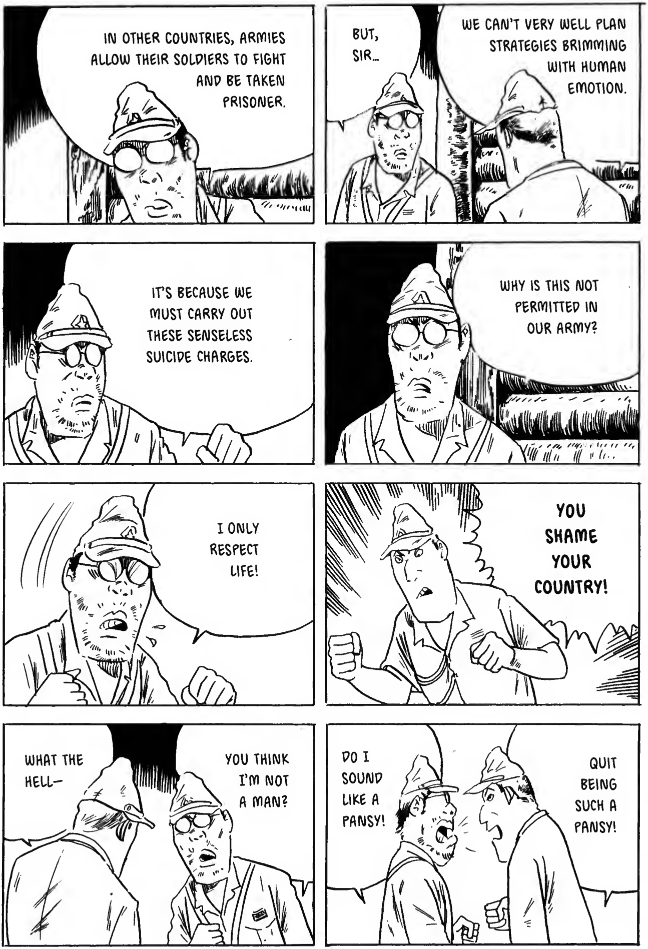

ARE YOU THE GENERAL, SIR?
YOU MAY SIT DOWN.
YOU'LL COME WITH ME TO CAPE ST. GEORGE TONIGHT.
WHAT?
WHY DID YOU COME HERE?
I'M HERE TO REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WAR.
REPORT ON THE WAR?
THE DOCTOR FROM A SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR WOUNDED?

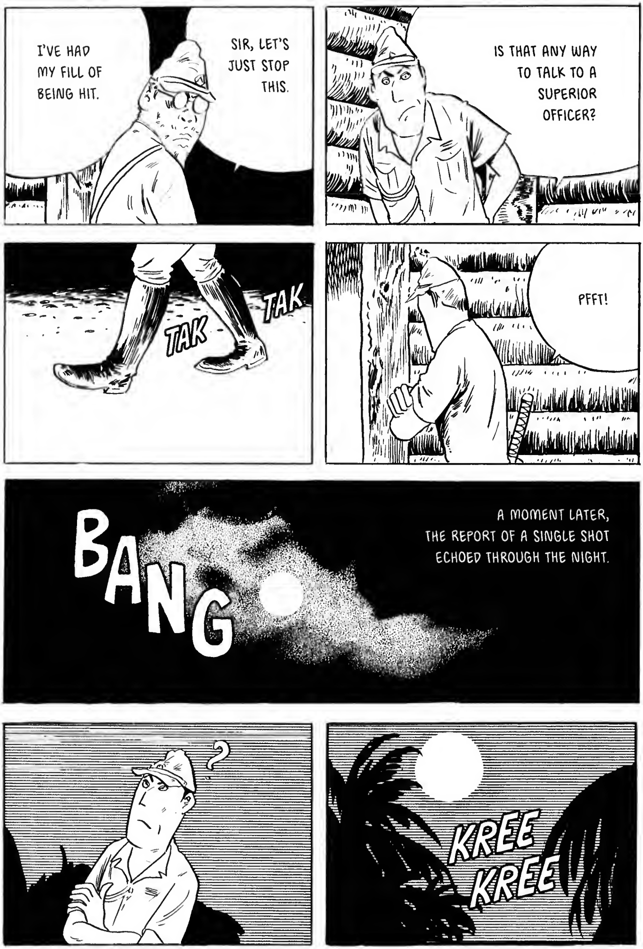

YOUR CASUALTY REPORT SHOULD BE CLEARER THAN THAT!
YOU'RE THE DOCTOR.
YOU BELIEVE?
LIGHTLY WOUNDED MEN ALSO JOINED THE ATTACK, BUT I BELIEVE THE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED COMMITTED SUICIDE WITH THEIR GRENADES.
YOU LEFT YOUR WOUNDED AND RAN AWAY, DIDN'T YOU?
AFTER THE BATTALION BEGAN THE CHARGE, THEY WERE ATTACKED BY ANOTHER ENEMY SECTION COMING UP FROM THE WATER.
SIR.
YOU IDIOT!
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO REPORT THAT?
WE HAD NO IDEA WHO WAS DOING WHAT WHERE...BEFORE I KNEW IT, WE WERE WALKING TOWARDS CAPE ST. GEORGE.

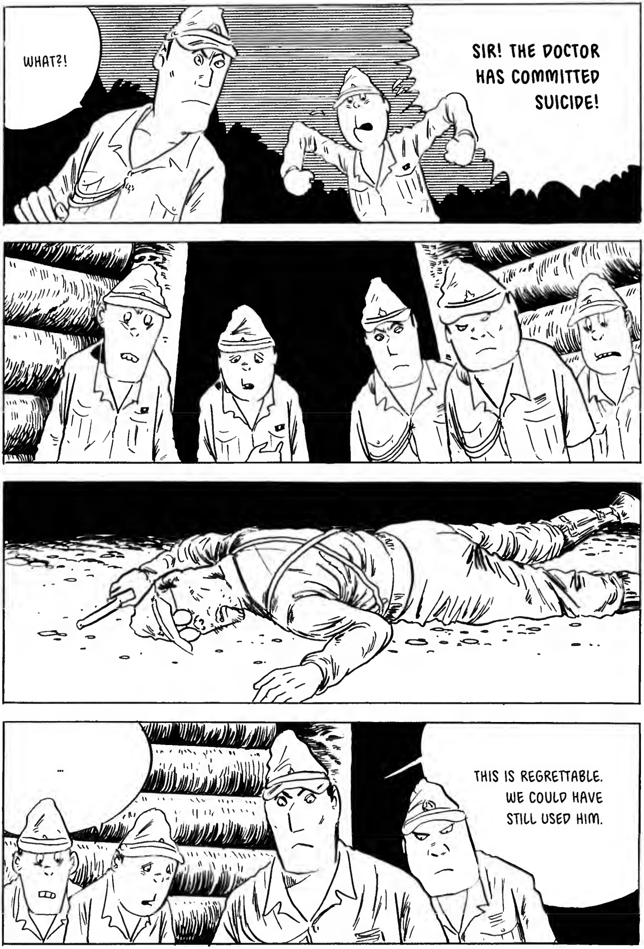

FOOL!
I WAS NOT PERMITTED TO SEE HIM.
I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO THE GENERAL.
WHAT IS THIS THING YOU HAD TO SAY?
IF YOU WERE IN FACT ABLE TO MEET WITH THE GENERAL, YOU WOULD ONLY FACE CHARGES AS A DESERTER.
I AM JUST A MAN WHO WILL JOIN YOU ON A DAIHATSU.
YOU'LL ONLY HIT ME IF I DO TELL YOU, SIR.
NO, I GIVE UP ON THAT.
COULD I ASK YOU FOR A CIGARETTE?
I AM REALLY SORRY FOR ASKING, BUT PERHAPS...
I WON'T HIT YOU, SO WHY DON'T YOU TRY ME?

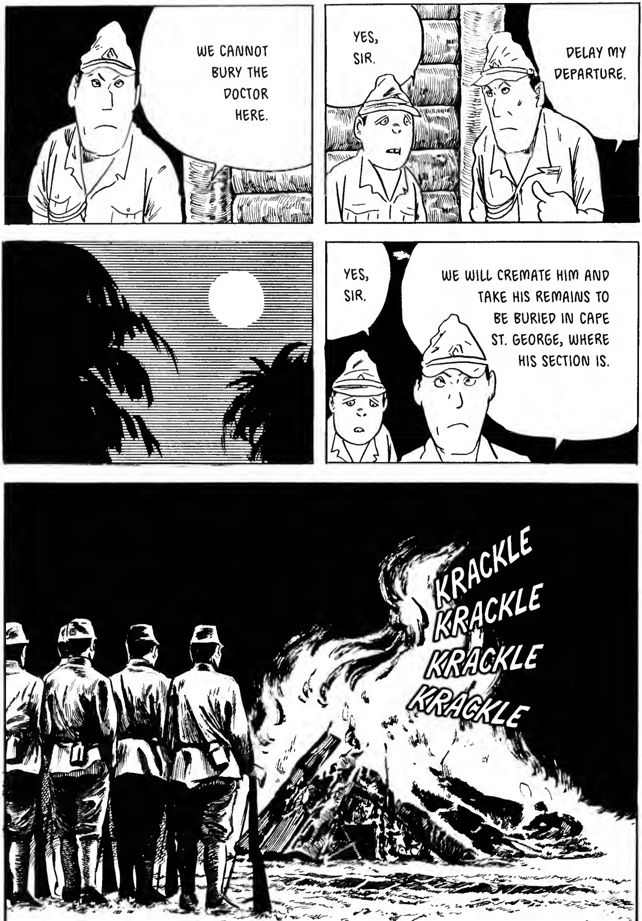

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY CIGARETTES?
I HAVEN'T HAD A SMOKE IN A MONTH NOW.
SIR, WHY HAVE A SMALL BATTALION ATTACK A LARGER FORCE THEY CANNOT POSSIBLY WIN AGAINST?
AND ON TOP OF THAT, HAVE THAT BATTALION GO ON A SUICIDE MISSION?
TO BUY TIME.
BUT WHY, SIR? TIME FOR WHAT?
TO ALLOW THE REAR TO ENTRENCH AND MUSTER ITS FORCES PROPERLY.
BUT TO ALLOW THE REAR TO ENTRENCH, THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO NEED, NO NEED FOR A SUICIDE CHARGE! ISN'T STRATEGY ABOUT REACHING THE GOAL WITHOUT A SUICIDE CHARGE?
WHAT'S SO STRATEGIC ABOUT LOSING MEN WITH BRIGHT FUTURES IN A SUICIDE CHARGE?
IMBECILE!


YOU ARE A SOLDIER IN THIS ARMY! YOU WILL WATCH YOUR WORDS.
WHHAP
YOU ARMY MEN ONLY WANT TO BLINDLY KILL PEOPLE FOR NO REASON AT ALL.
I'M NO SOLDIER.
I'M A DOCTOR.
IS YOUR LITTLE WORM LIFE SO PRECIOUS?!
HOW DARE YOU!
STEP BACK AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE!
YOU'RE ALL MAD!
YOU DON'T VALUE LIFE AT ALL, DO YOU?

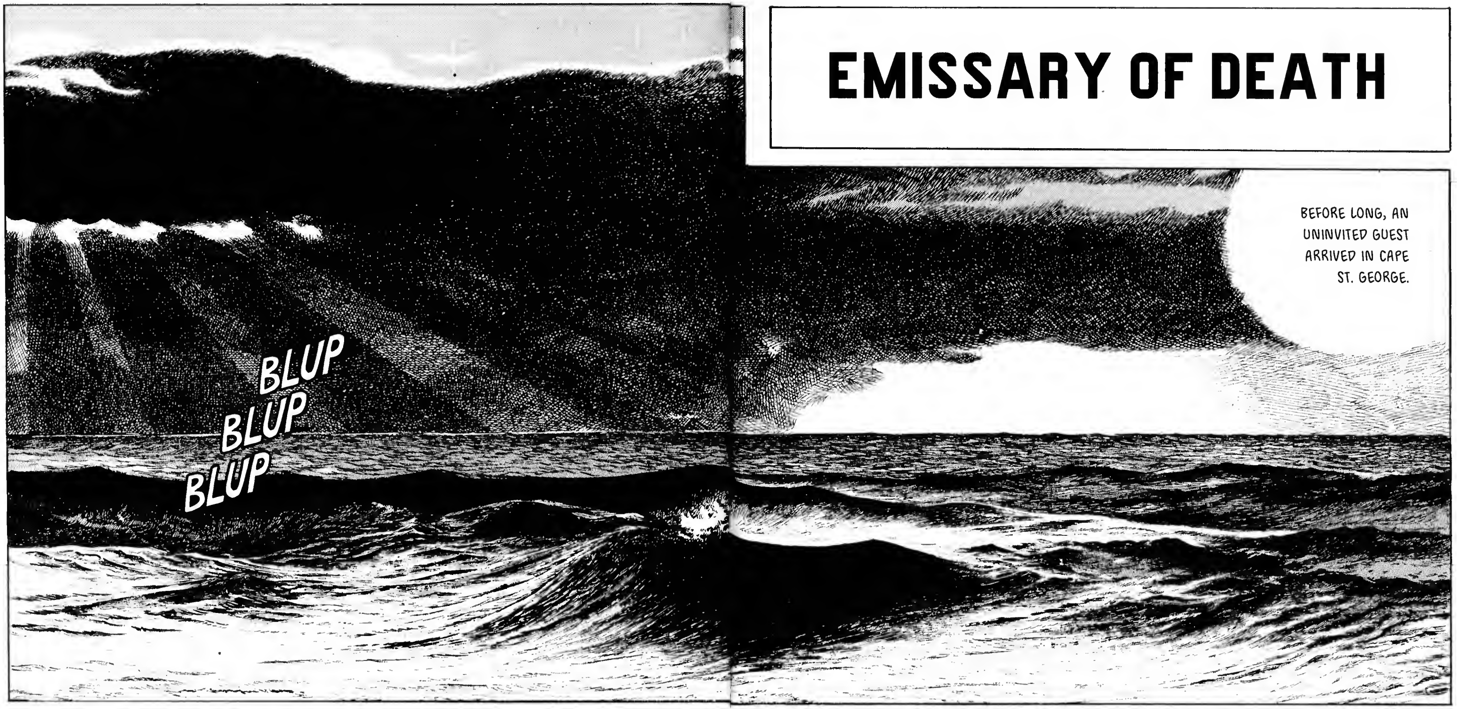

IN OTHER COUNTRIES, ARMIES ALLOW THEIR SOLDIERS TO FIGHT AND BE TAKEN PRISONER.
BUT, SIR...
WE CAN'T VERY WELL PLAN STRATEGIES BRIMMING WITH HUMAN EMOTION.
IT'S BECAUSE WE MUST CARRY OUT THESE SENSELESS SUICIDE CHARGES.
WHY IS THIS NOT PERMITTED IN OUR ARMY?
I ONLY RESPECT LIFE!
YOU SHAME YOUR COUNTRY!
WHAT THE HELL–
YOU THINK I'M NOT A MAN?
DO I SOUND LIKE A PANSY!
QUIT BEING SUCH A PANSY!

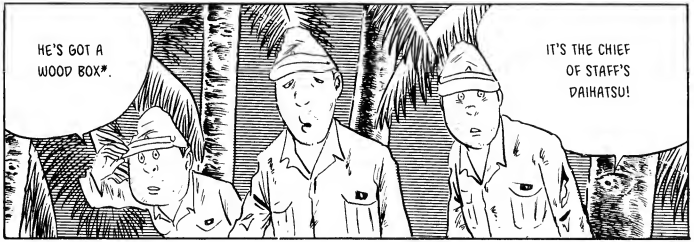

I'VE HAD MY FILL OF BEING HIT.
SIR, LET'S JUST STOP THIS.
IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK TO A SUPERIOR OFFICER?
TAK
TAK
PFFT!
BANG
A MOMENT LATER, THE REPORT OF A SINGLE SHOT ECHOED THROUGH THE NIGHT.
?
KREE
KREE


WHAT?!
SIR! THE DOCTOR HAS COMMITTED SUICIDE!
...
THIS IS REGRETTABLE. WE COULD HAVE STILL USED HIM.

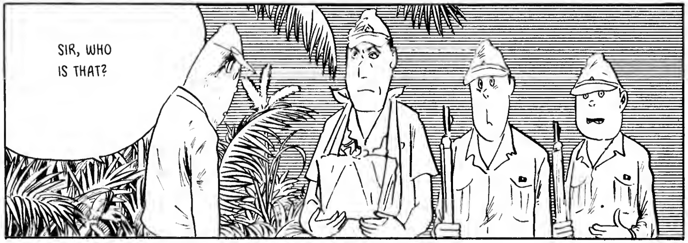

WE CANNOT BURY THE DOCTOR HERE.
YES, SIR.
DELAY MY DEPARTURE.
YES, SIR.
WE WILL CREMATE HIM AND TAKE HIS REMAINS TO BE BURIED IN CAPE ST. GEORGE, WHERE HIS SECTION IS.
KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE

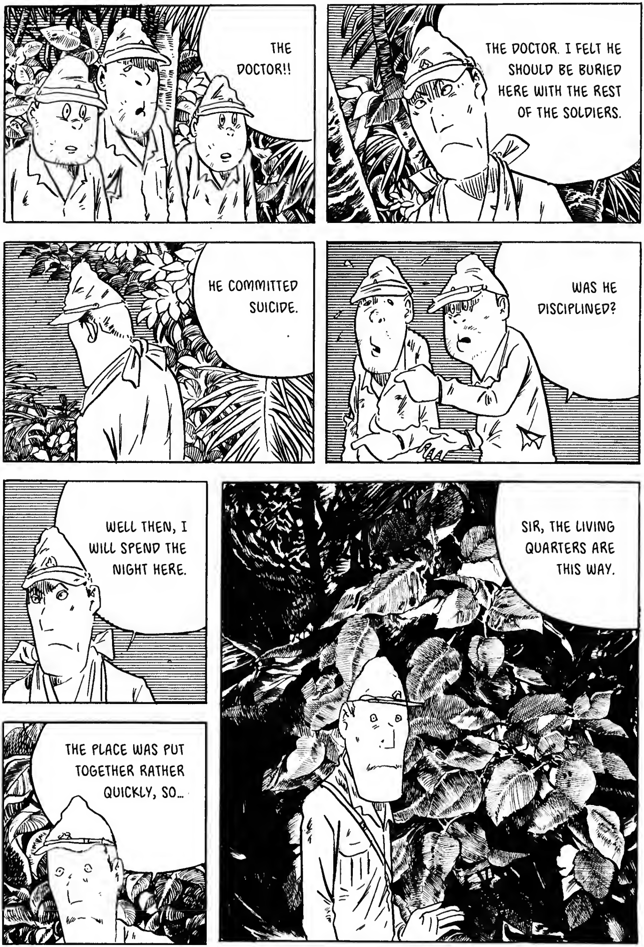
EMISSARY OF DEATH

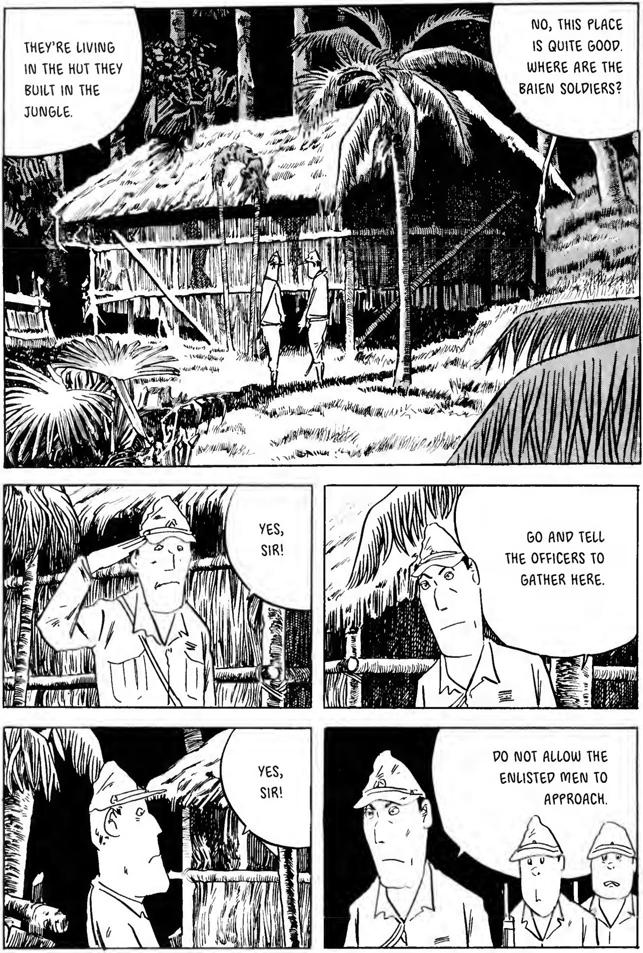

BEFORE LONG, AN UNINVITED GUEST ARRIVED IN CAPE ST. GEORGE.
BLUP BLUP BLUP

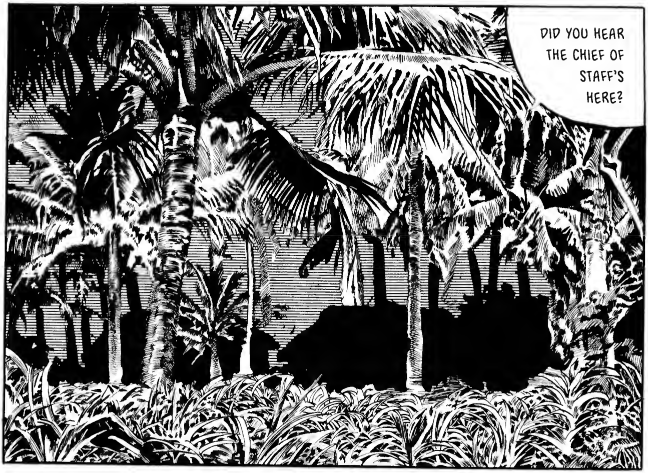

IT'S THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S DAIHATSU!
HE'S GOT A WOOD BOX*.

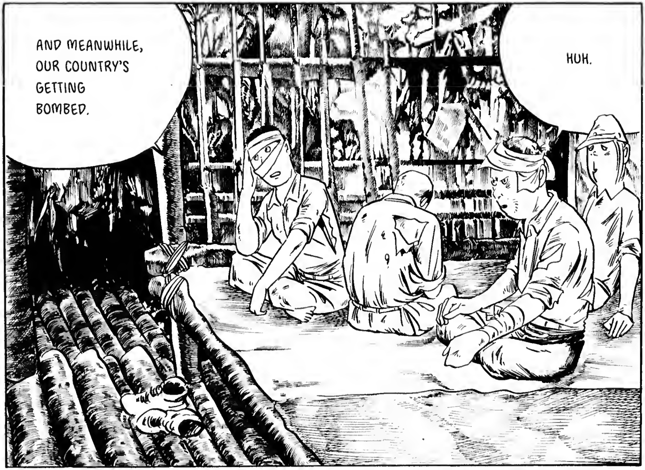
*IN JAPANESE BUDDHIST TRADITION, THE DEAD ARE CREMATED AND PLACED IN A WHITE WOODEN BOX.

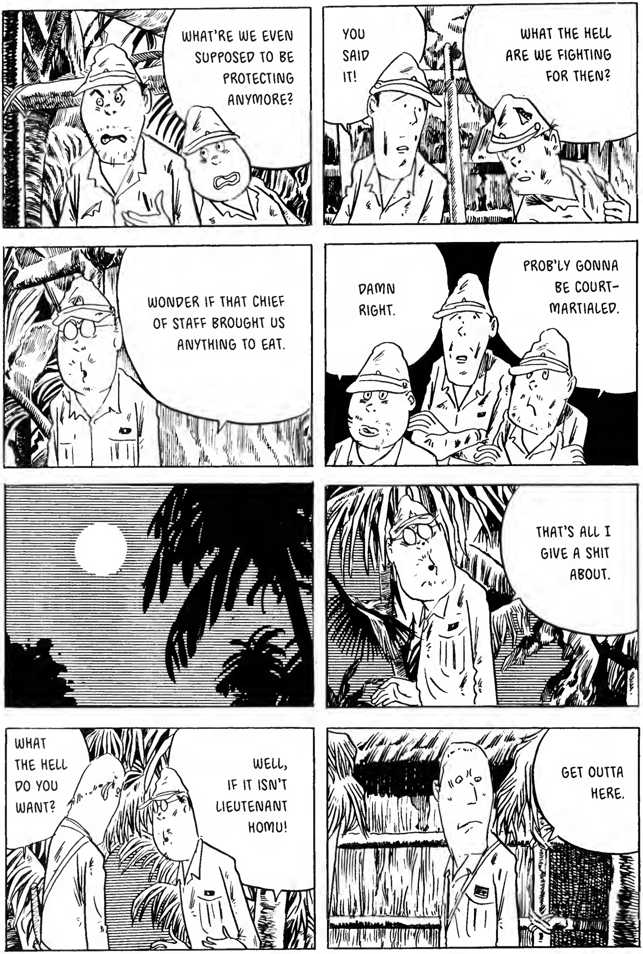

SIR, WHO IS THAT?

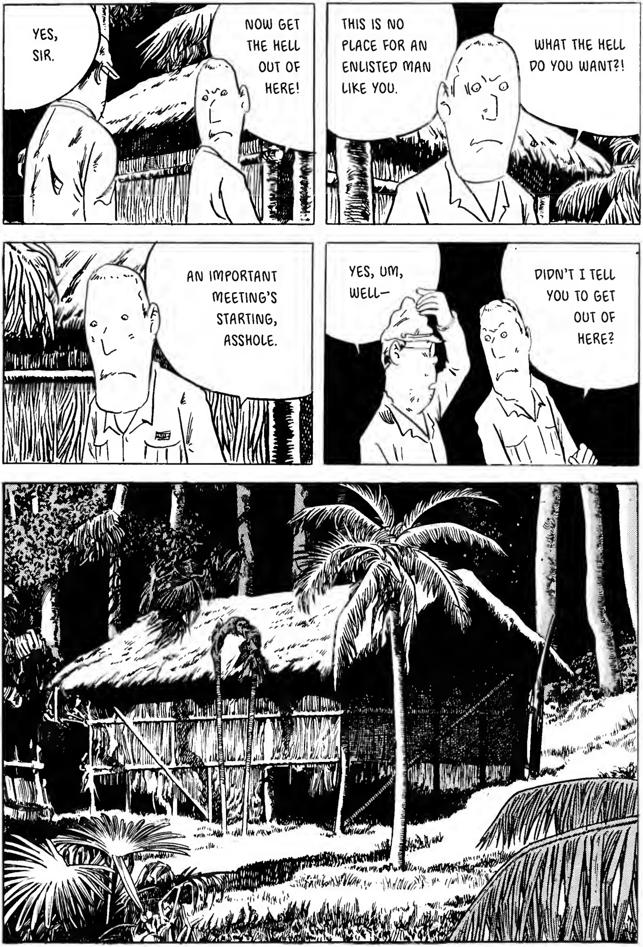

THE DOCTOR!!
THE DOCTOR. I FELT HE SHOULD BE BURIED HERE WITH THE REST OF THE SOLDIERS.
HE COMMITTED SUICIDE.
WAS HE DISCIPLINED?
WELL THEN, I WILL SPEND THE NIGHT HERE.
THE PLACE WAS PUT TOGETHER RATHER QUICKLY, SO...
SIR, THE LIVING QUARTERS ARE THIS WAY.

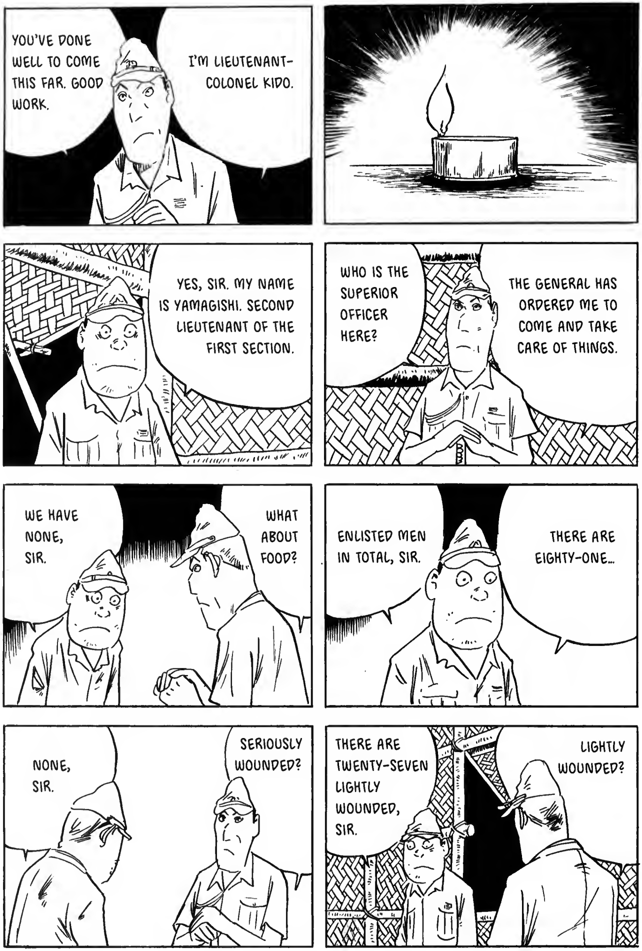

NO, THIS PLACE IS QUITE GOOD. WHERE ARE THE BAIEN SOLDIERS?
THEY'RE LIVING IN THE HUT THEY BUILT IN THE JUNGLE.
GO AND TELL THE OFFICERS TO GATHER HERE.
YES, SIR!
DO NOT ALLOW THE ENLISTED MEN TO APPROACH.
YES, SIR!

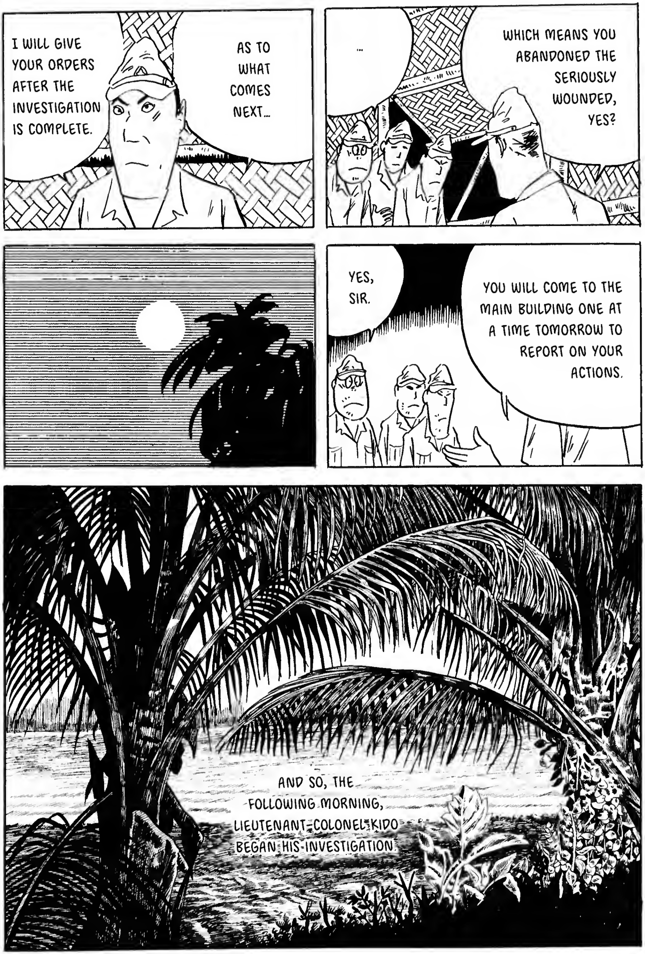

DID YOU HEAR THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S HERE?

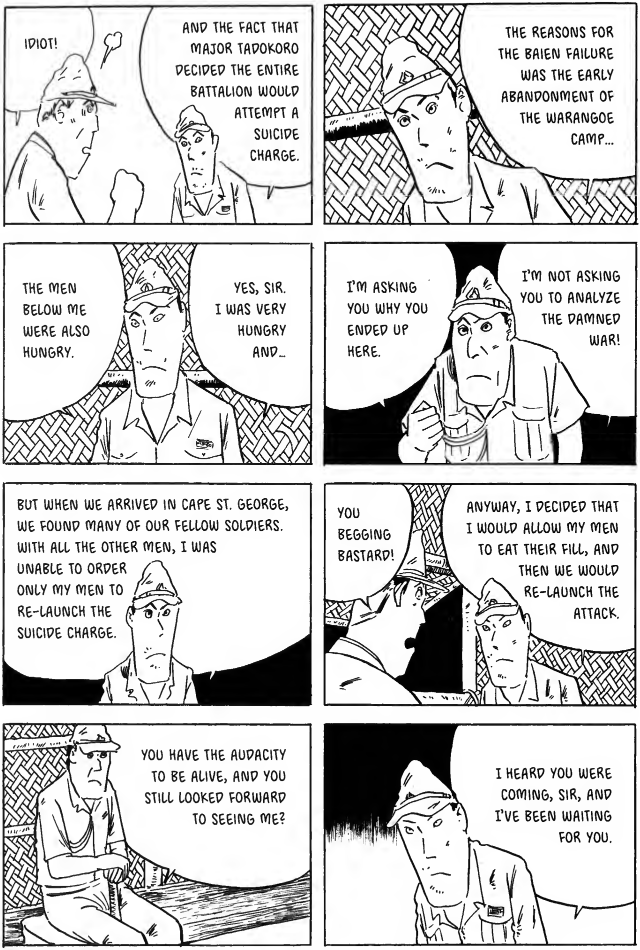

HUH.
AND MEANWHILE, OUR COUNTRY'S GETTING BOMBED.

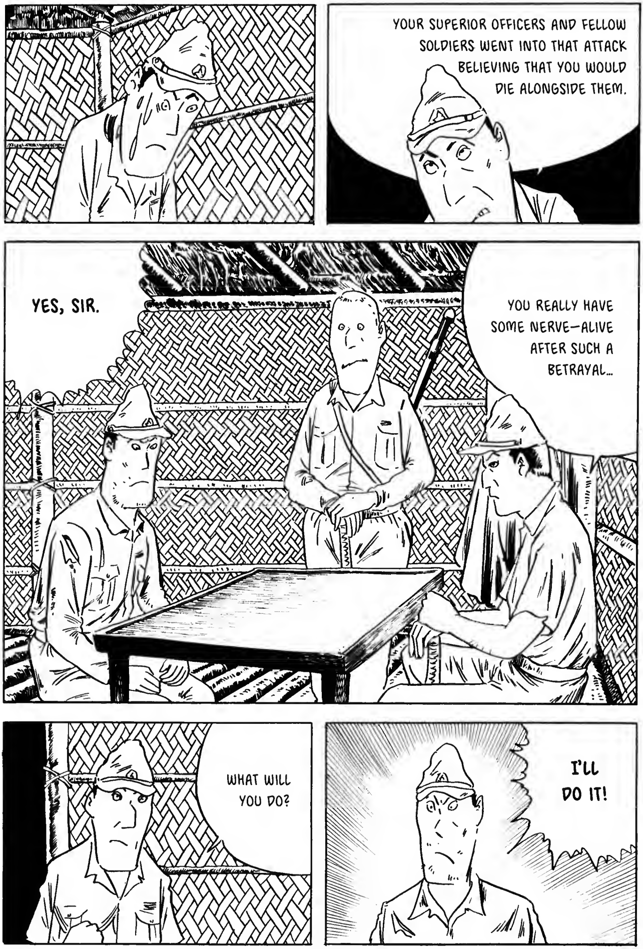

WHAT'RE WE EVEN SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTING ANYMORE?
YOU SAID IT!
WHAT THE HELL ARE WE FIGHTING FOR THEN?
WONDER IF THAT CHIEF OF STAFF BROUGHT US ANYTHING TO EAT.
DAMN RIGHT.
PROB'LY GONNA BE COURT-MARTIALED.
THAT'S ALL I GIVE A SHIT ABOUT.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?
WELL, IF IT ISN'T LIEUTENANT HOMU!
GET OUTTA HERE.

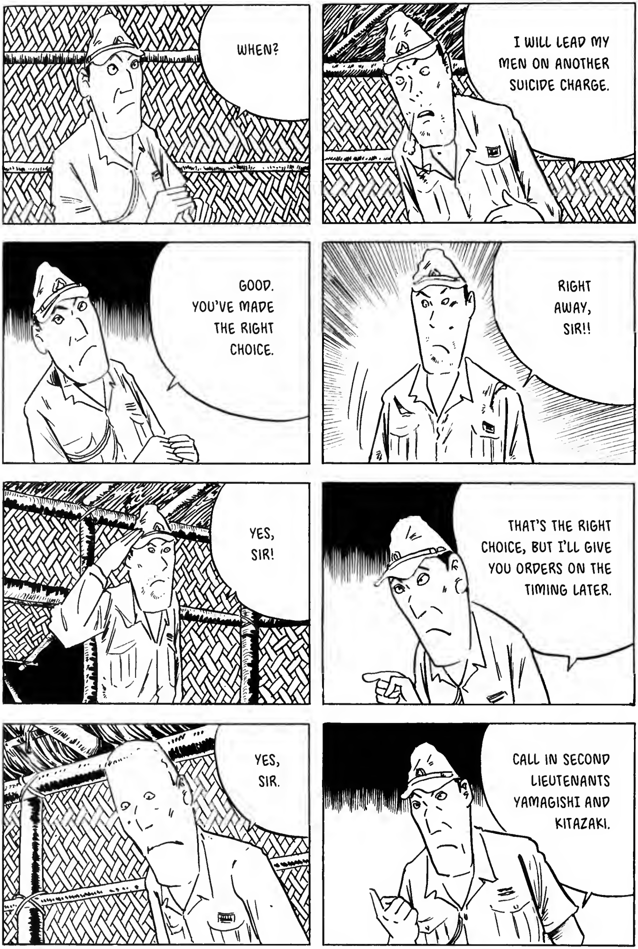

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?!
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR AN ENLISTED MAN LIKE YOU.
NOW GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
YES, SIR.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO GET OUT OF HERE?
YES, UM, WELL—
AN IMPORTANT MEETING'S STARTING, ASSHOLE.

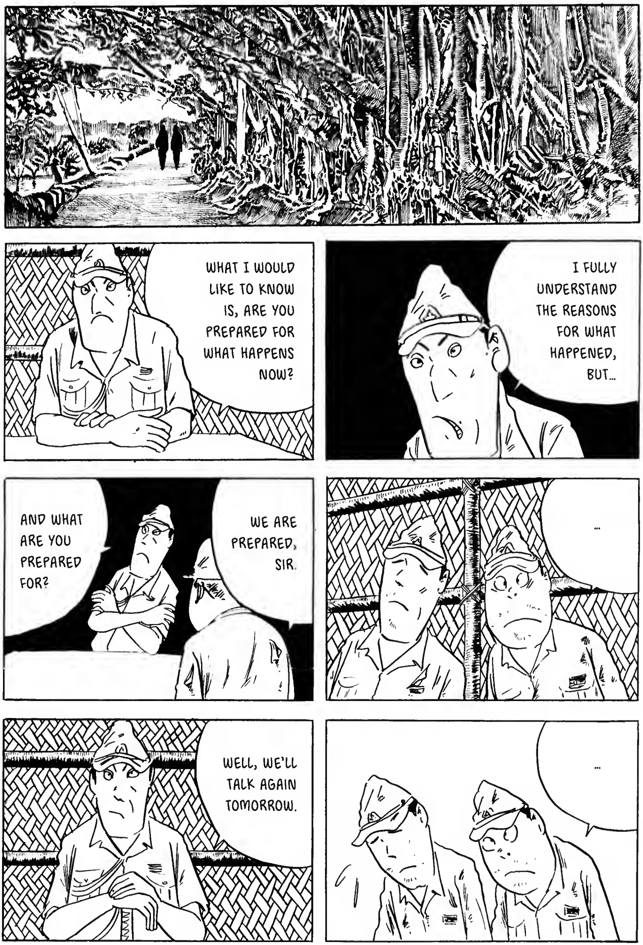

I'M LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KIDO.
YOU'VE DONE WELL TO COME THIS FAR. GOOD WORK.
THE GENERAL HAS ORDERED ME TO COME AND TAKE CARE OF THINGS.
WHO IS THE SUPERIOR OFFICER HERE?
YES, SIR. MY NAME IS YAMAGISHI. SECOND LIEUTENANT OF THE FIRST SECTION.
THERE ARE EIGHTY-ONE...
ENLISTED MEN IN TOTAL, SIR.
WHAT ABOUT FOOD?
WE HAVE NONE, SIR.
LIGHTLY WOUNDED?
THERE ARE TWENTY-SEVEN LIGHTLY WOUNDED, SIR.
SERIOUSLY WOUNDED?
NONE, SIR.

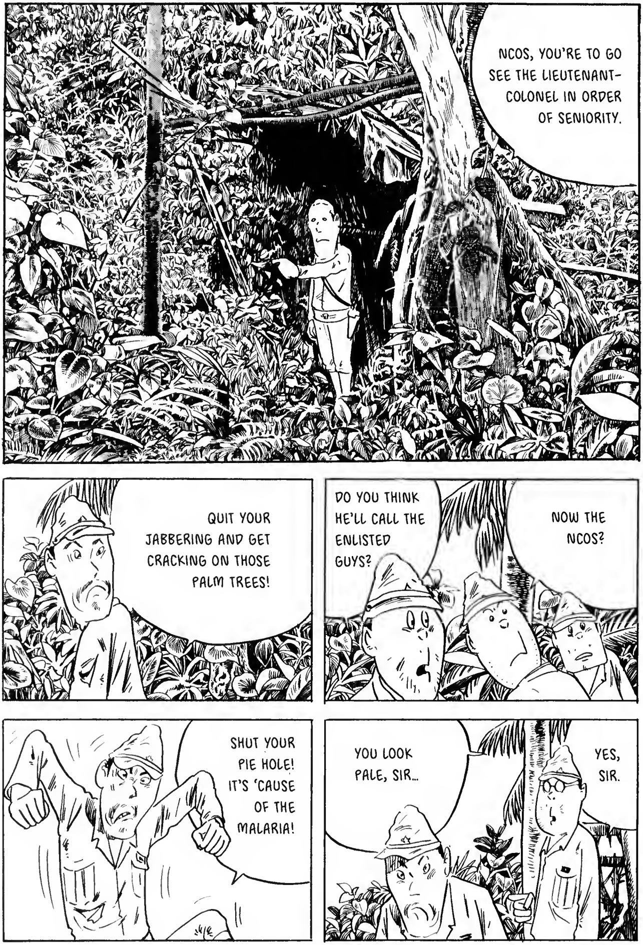

I WILL GIVE YOUR ORDERS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETE.
AS TO WHAT COMES NEXT...
WHICH MEANS YOU ABANDONED THE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, YES?
...
YOU WILL COME TO THE MAIN BUILDING ONE AT A TIME TOMORROW TO REPORT ON YOUR ACTIONS.
YES, SIR.
AND SO, THE FOLLOWING MORNING, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KIDO BEGAN HIS INVESTIGATION.

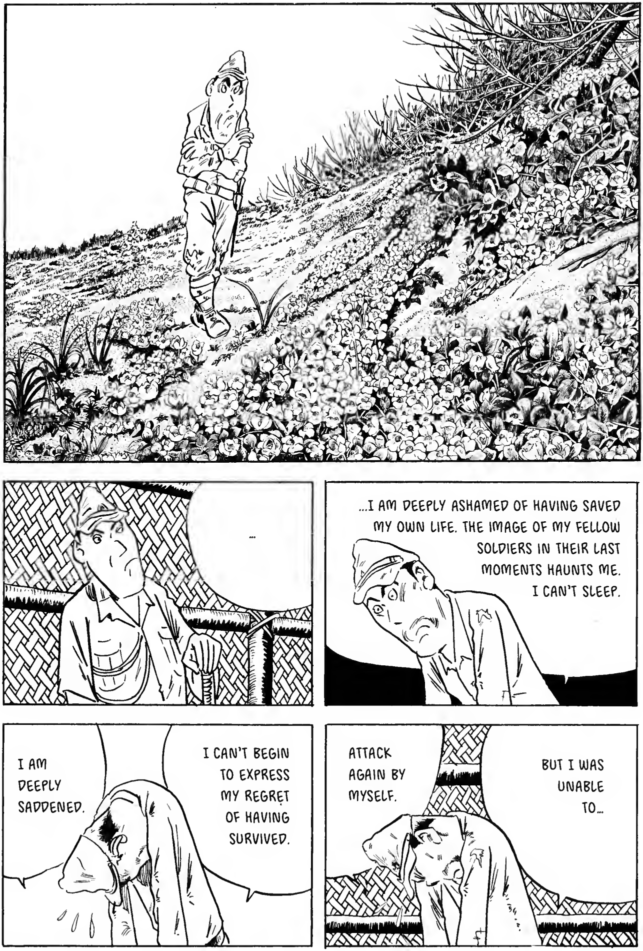

THE REASONS FOR THE BAIEN FAILURE WAS THE EARLY ABANDONMENT OF THE WARANGOE CAMP...
AND THE FACT THAT MAJOR TADOKORO DECIDED THE ENTIRE BATTALION WOULD ATTEMPT A SUICIDE CHARGE.
IDIOT!
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO ANALYZE THE DAMNED WAR!
I'M ASKING YOU WHY YOU ENDED UP HERE.
YES, SIR. I WAS VERY HUNGRY AND...
THE MEN BELOW ME WERE ALSO HUNGRY.
ANYWAY, I DECIDED THAT I WOULD ALLOW MY MEN TO EAT THEIR FILL, AND THEN WE WOULD RE-LAUNCH THE ATTACK.
YOU BEGGING BASTARD!
BUT WHEN WE ARRIVED IN CAPE ST. GEORGE, WE FOUND MANY OF OUR FELLOW SOLDIERS. WITH ALL THE OTHER MEN, I WAS UNABLE TO ORDER ONLY MY MEN TO RE-LAUNCH THE SUICIDE CHARGE.
I HEARD YOU WERE COMING, SIR, AND I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
YOU HAVE THE AUDACITY TO BE ALIVE, AND YOU STILL LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING ME?

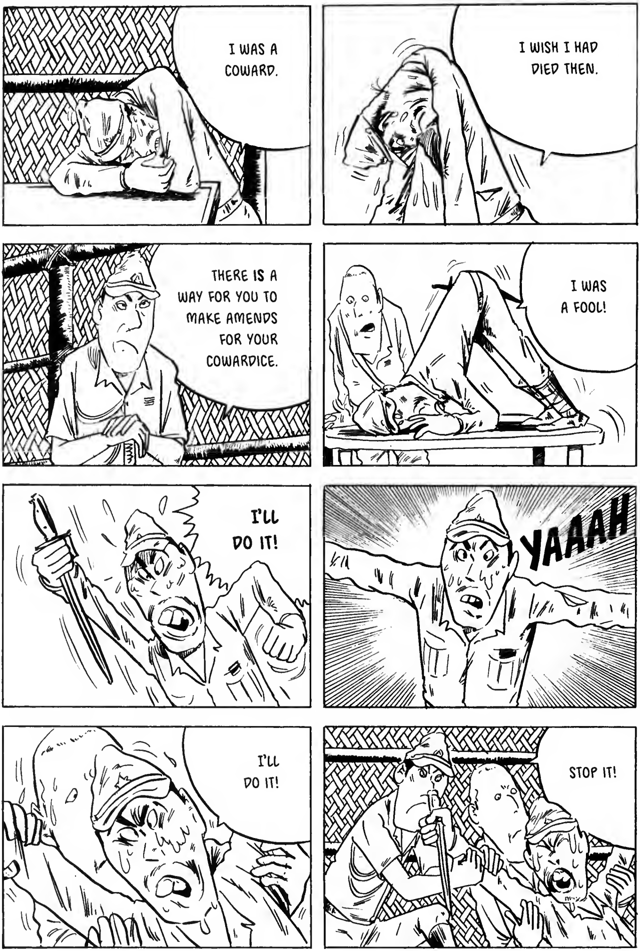

YOUR SUPERIOR OFFICERS AND FELLOW SOLDIERS WENT INTO THAT ATTACK BELIEVING THAT YOU WOULD DIE ALONGSIDE THEM.
YES, SIR.
YOU REALLY HAVE SOME NERVE—ALIVE AFTER SUCH A BETRAYAL...
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I'LL DO IT!

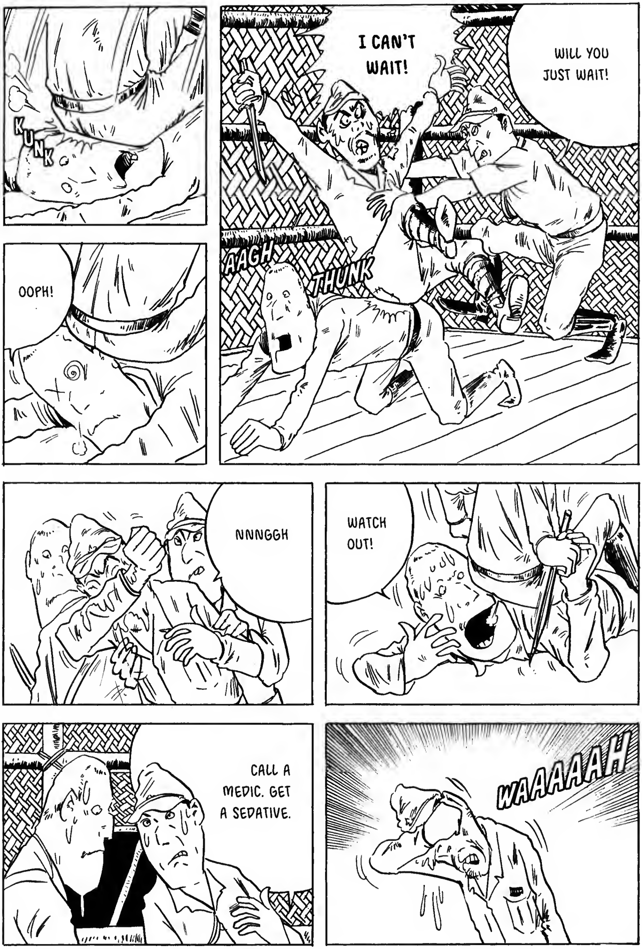

WHEN?
I WILL LEAD MY MEN ON ANOTHER SUICIDE CHARGE.
GOOD. YOU'VE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
RIGHT AWAY, SIR!!
YES, SIR!
THAT'S THE RIGHT CHOICE, BUT I'LL GIVE YOU ORDERS ON THE TIMING LATER.
YES, SIR.
CALL IN SECOND LIEUTENANTS YAMAGISHI AND KITAZAKI.

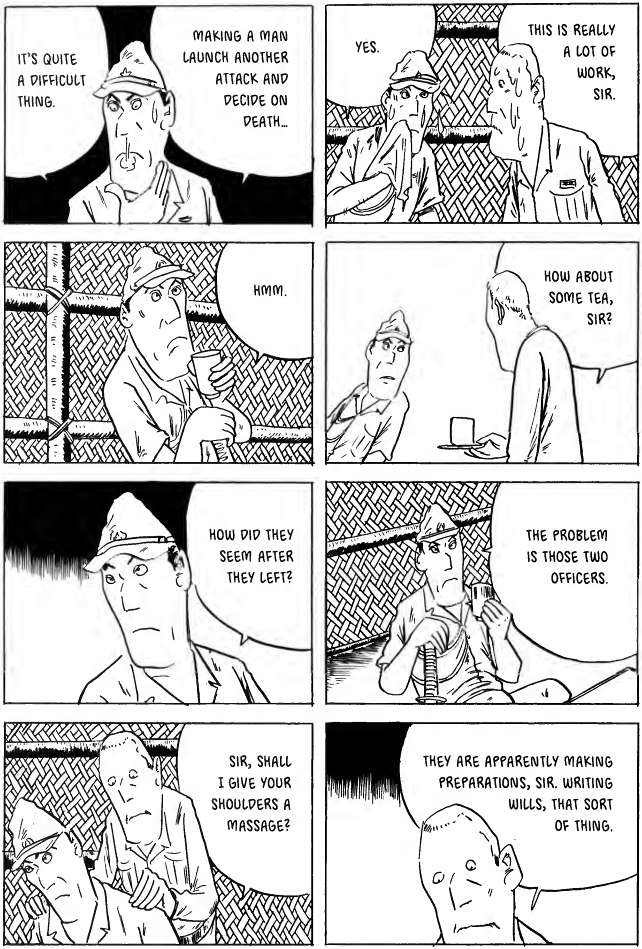

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IS, ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR WHAT HAPPENED, BUT...
WE ARE PREPARED, SIR.
AND WHAT ARE YOU PREPARED FOR?
...
WELL, WE'LL TALK AGAIN TOMORROW.
...

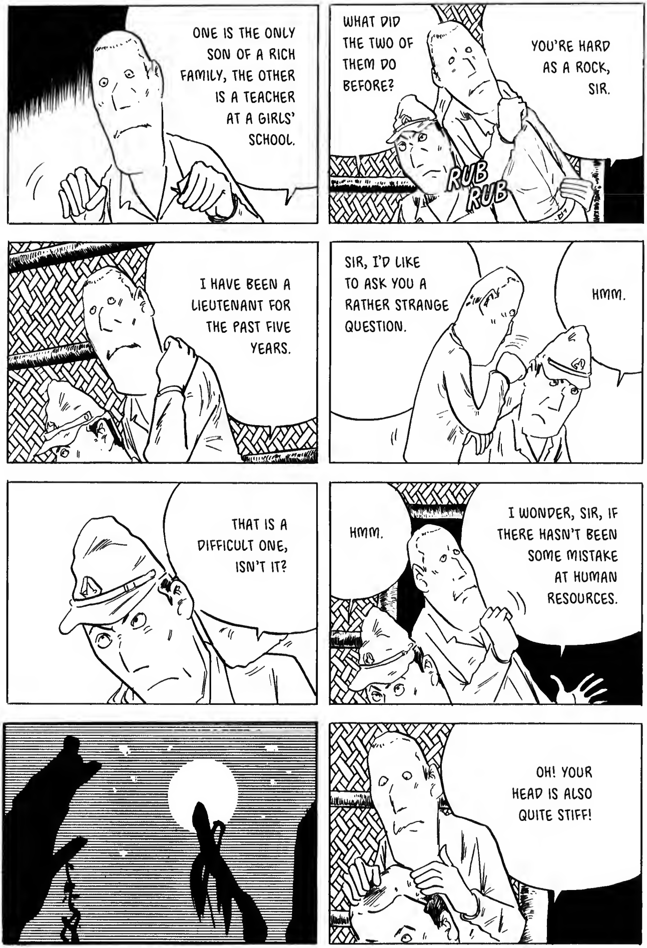

NCOS, YOU'RE TO GO SEE THE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN ORDER OF SENIORITY.
NOW THE NCOS?
DO YOU THINK HE'LL CALL THE ENLISTED GUYS?
QUIT YOUR JABBERING AND GET CRACKING ON THOSE PALM TREES!
YES, SIR.
YOU LOOK PALE, SIR...
SHUT YOUR PIE HOLE! IT'S 'CAUSE OF THE MALARIA!

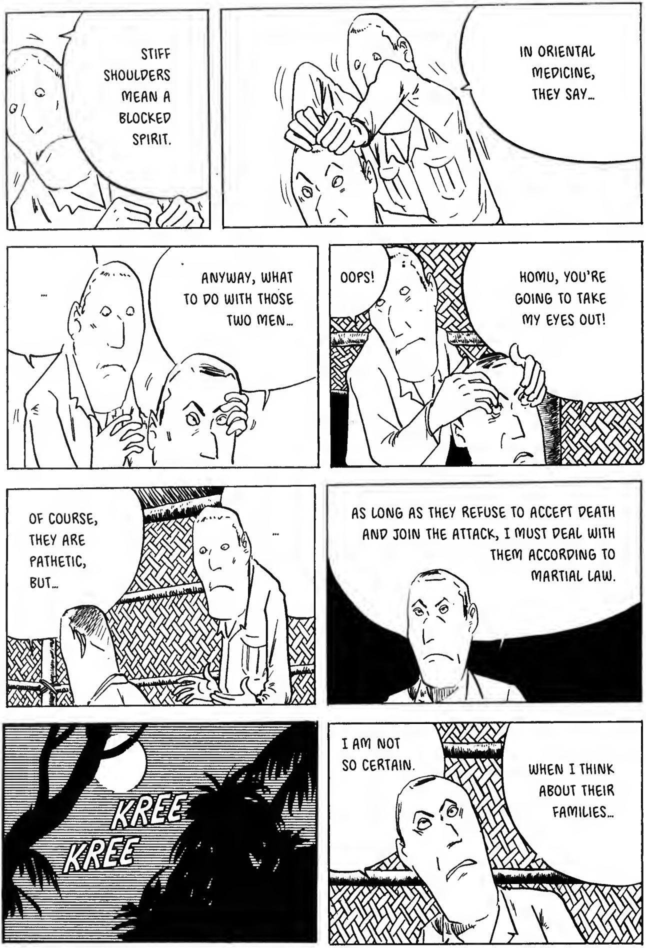

...I AM DEEPLY ASHAMED OF HAVING SAVED MY OWN LIFE. THE IMAGE OF MY FELLOW SOLDIERS IN THEIR LAST MOMENTS HAUNTS ME. I CAN'T SLEEP.
...
BUT I WAS UNABLE TO...
ATTACK AGAIN BY MYSELF.
I CAN'T BEGIN TO EXPRESS MY REGRET OF HAVING SURVIVED.
I AM DEEPLY SADDENED.

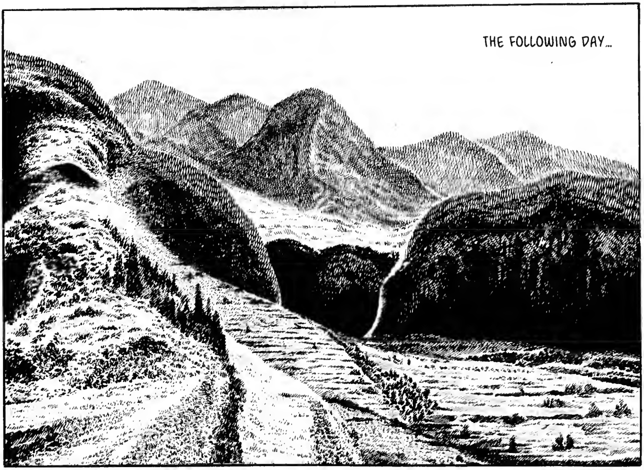

I WAS A COWARD.
I WISH I HAD DIED THEN.
THERE IS A WAY FOR YOU TO MAKE AMENDS FOR YOUR COWARDICE.
I WAS A FOOL!
I'LL DO IT!
YAAAH
I'LL DO IT!
STOP IT!

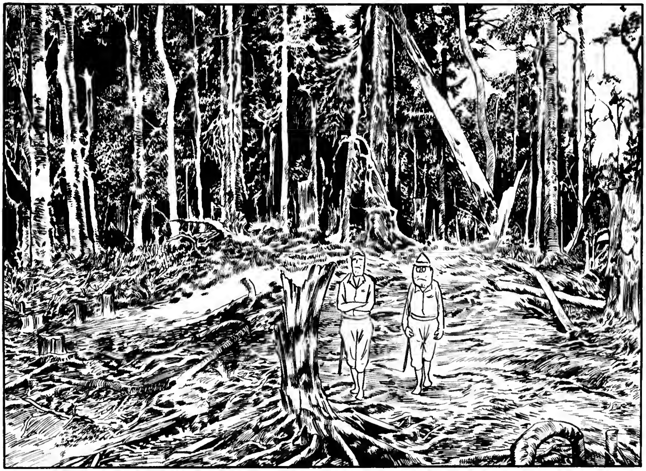

KUNK
OOPH!
I CAN'T WAIT!
WILL YOU JUST WAIT!
AAGH
THUNK
NNNGGH
WATCH OUT!
CALL A MEDIC. GET A SEDATIVE.
WAAAAAH

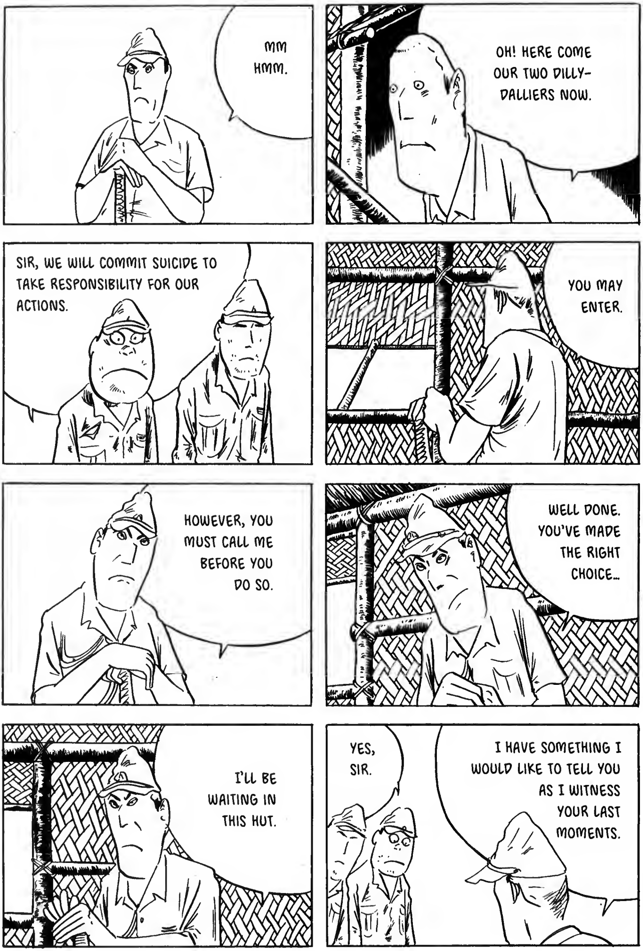

IT'S QUITE A DIFFICULT THING.
MAKING A MAN LAUNCH ANOTHER ATTACK AND DECIDE ON DEATH...
YES.
THIS IS REALLY A LOT OF WORK, SIR.
HMM.
HOW ABOUT SOME TEA, SIR?
HOW DID THEY SEEM AFTER THEY LEFT?
THE PROBLEM IS THOSE TWO OFFICERS.
SIR, SHALL I GIVE YOUR SHOULDERS A MASSAGE?
THEY ARE APPARENTLY MAKING PREPARATIONS, SIR. WRITING WILLS, THAT SORT OF THING.

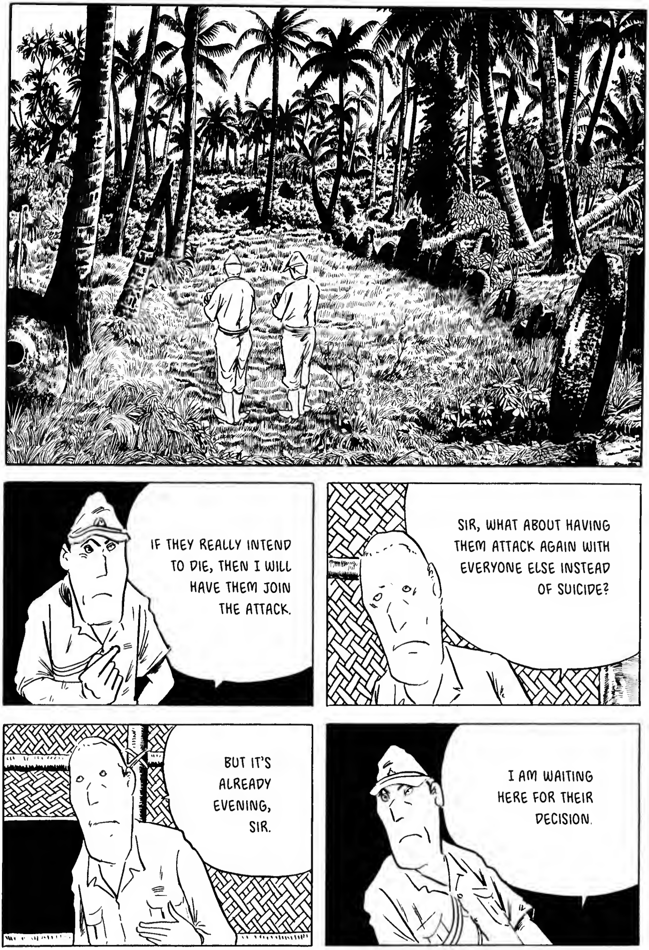

ONE IS THE ONLY SON OF A RICH FAMILY, THE OTHER IS A TEACHER AT A GIRLS' SCHOOL.
WHAT DID THE TWO OF THEM DO BEFORE?
YOU'RE HARD AS A ROCK, SIR.
RUB RUB
I HAVE BEEN A LIEUTENANT FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS.
SIR, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A RATHER STRANGE QUESTION.
HMM.
THAT IS A DIFFICULT ONE, ISN'T IT?
HMM.
I WONDER, SIR, IF THERE HASN'T BEEN SOME MISTAKE AT HUMAN RESOURCES.
OH! YOUR HEAD IS ALSO QUITE STIFF!

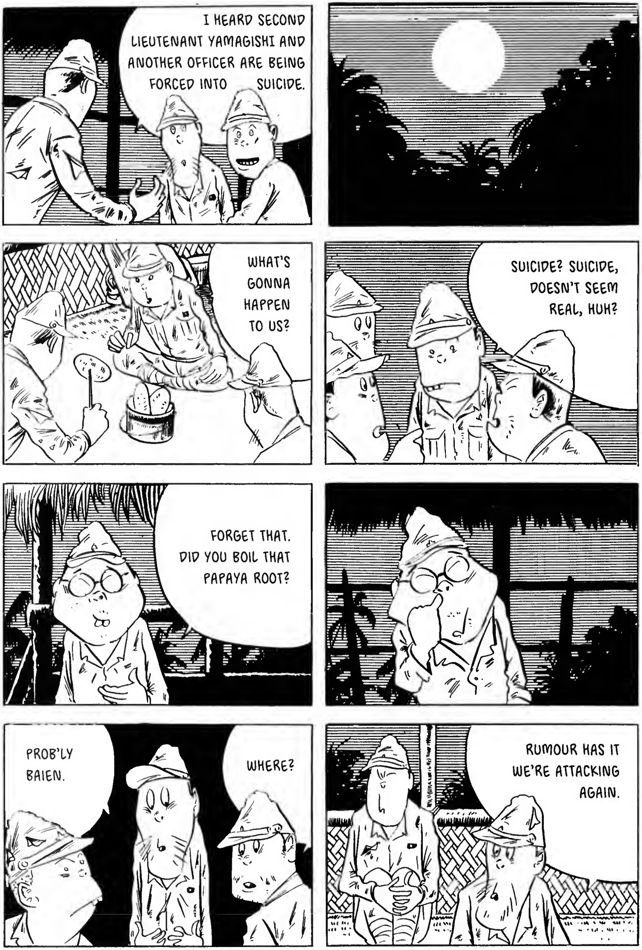

STIFF SHOULDERS MEAN A BLOCKED SPIRIT.
IN ORIENTAL MEDICINE, THEY SAY...
...
ANYWAY, WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE TWO MEN...
OOPS!
HOMU, YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE MY EYES OUT!
OF COURSE, THEY ARE PATHETIC, BUT...
...
AS LONG AS THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT DEATH AND JOIN THE ATTACK, I MUST DEAL WITH THEM ACCORDING TO MARTIAL LAW.
KREE
KREE
I AM NOT SO CERTAIN.
WHEN I THINK ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES...

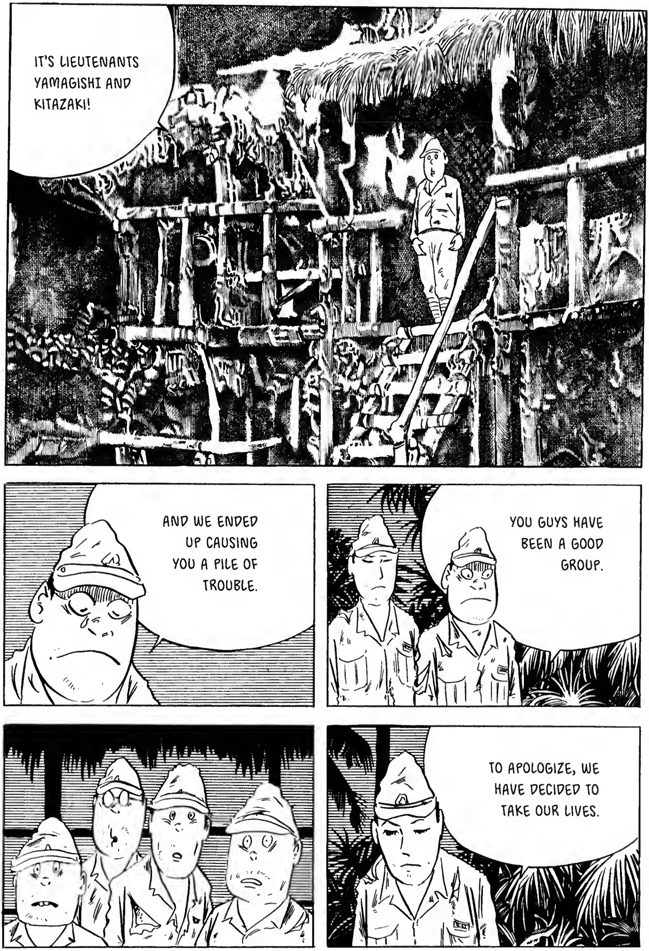

THE FOLLOWING DAY...

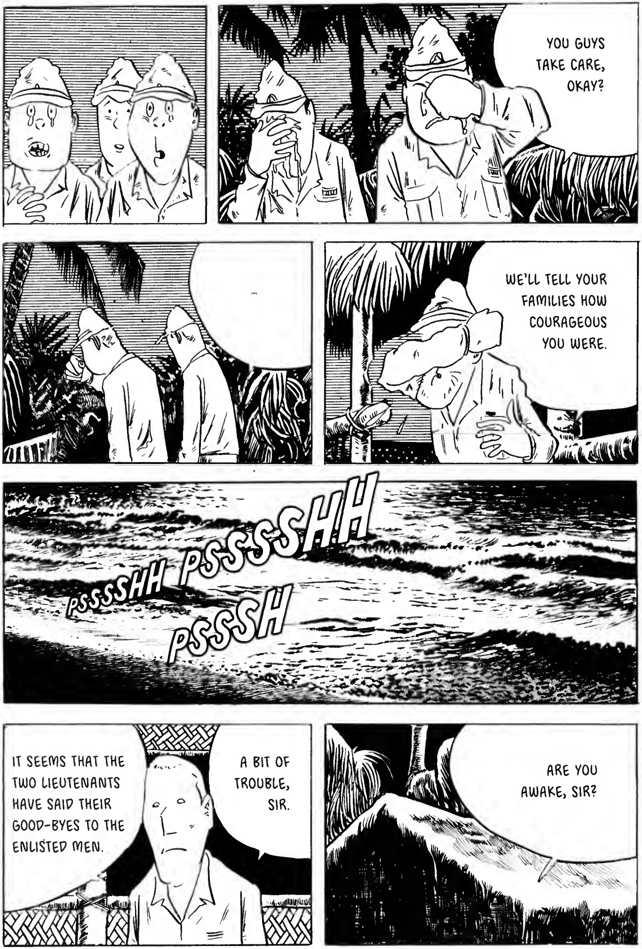


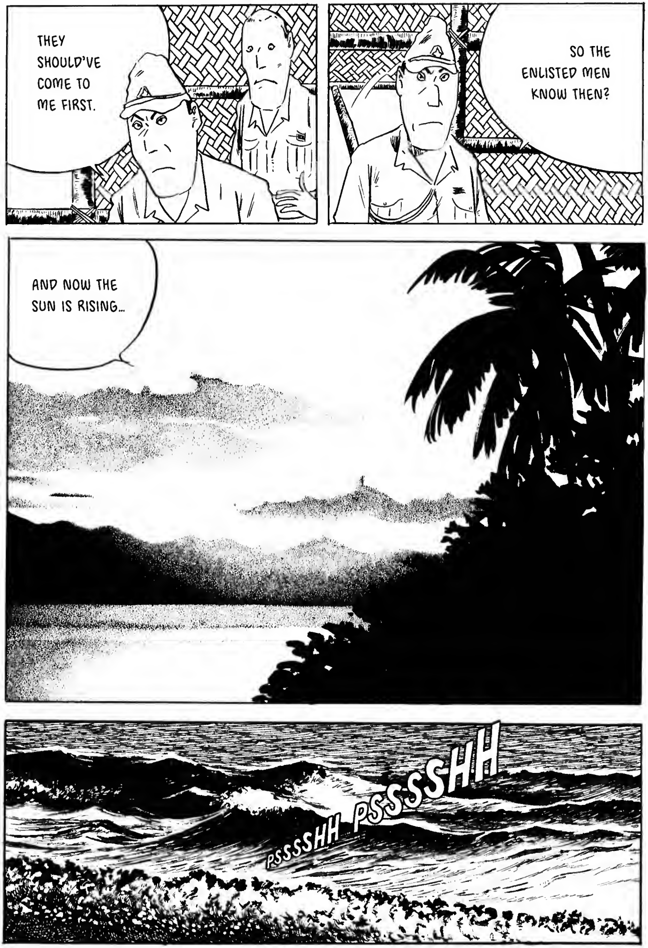

MM HMM.
OH! HERE COME OUR TWO DILLY-DALLIERS NOW.
SIR, WE WILL COMMIT SUICIDE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS.
YOU MAY ENTER.
HOWEVER, YOU MUST CALL ME BEFORE YOU DO SO.
WELL DONE. YOU'VE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE...
I'LL BE WAITING IN THIS HUT.
YES, SIR.
I HAVE SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU AS I WITNESS YOUR LAST MOMENTS.

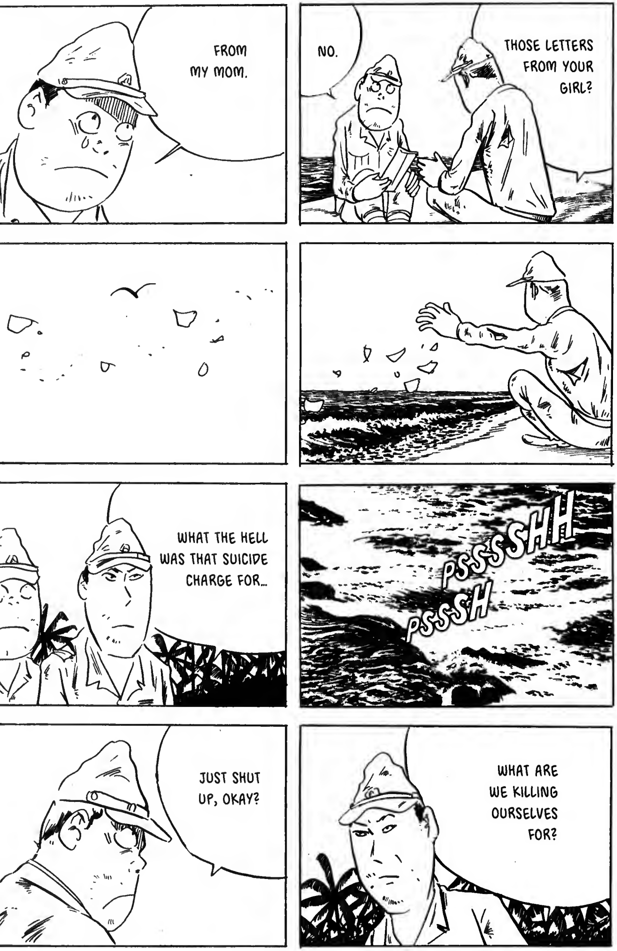

IF THEY REALLY INTEND TO DIE, THEN I WILL HAVE THEM JOIN THE ATTACK.
SIR, WHAT ABOUT HAVING THEM ATTACK AGAIN WITH EVERYONE ELSE INSTEAD OF SUICIDE?
BUT IT'S ALREADY EVENING, SIR.
I AM WAITING HERE FOR THEIR DECISION.

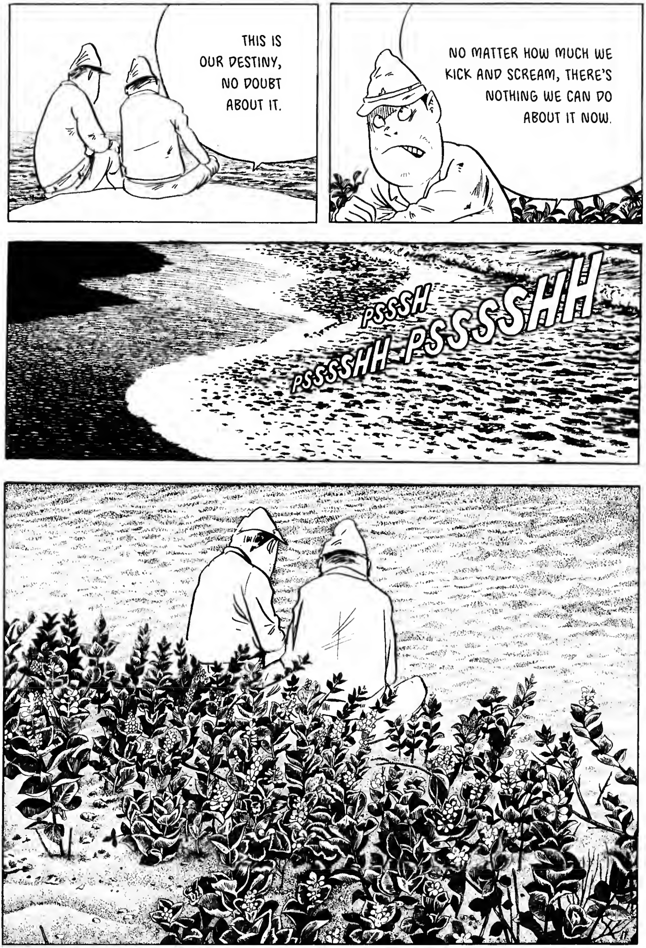

I HEARD SECOND LIEUTENANT YAMAGISHI AND ANOTHER OFFICER ARE BEING FORCED INTO SUICIDE.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO US?
SUICIDE? SUICIDE, DOESN'T SEEM REAL, HUH?
FORGET THAT. DID YOU BOIL THAT PAPAYA ROOT?
WHERE?
PROB'LY BAIEN.
RUMOUR HAS IT WE'RE ATTACKING AGAIN.

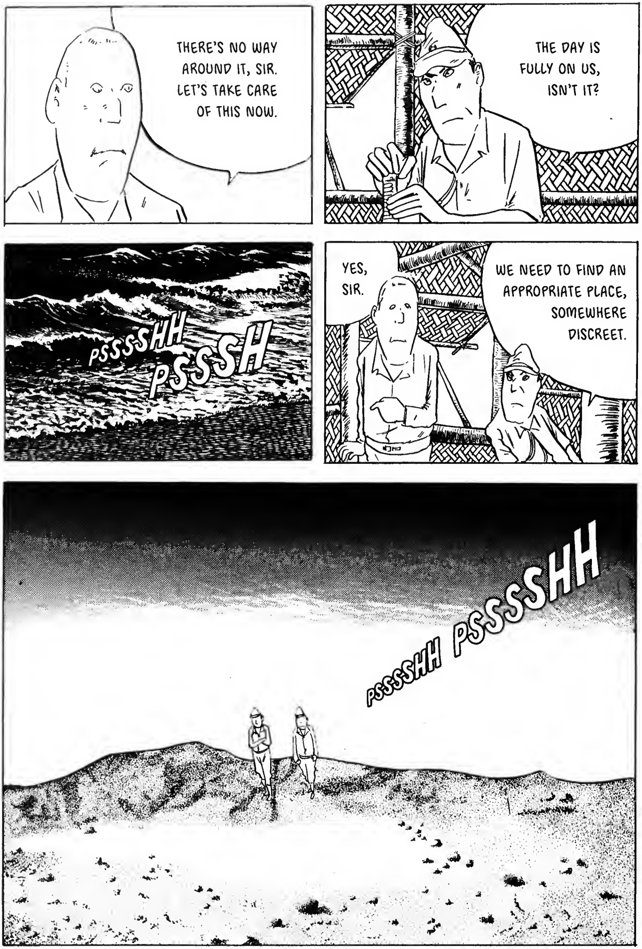

IT'S LIEUTENANTS YAMAGISHI AND KITAZAKI!
AND WE ENDED UP CAUSING YOU A PILE OF TROUBLE.
YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN A GOOD GROUP.
TO APOLOGIZE, WE HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE OUR LIVES.

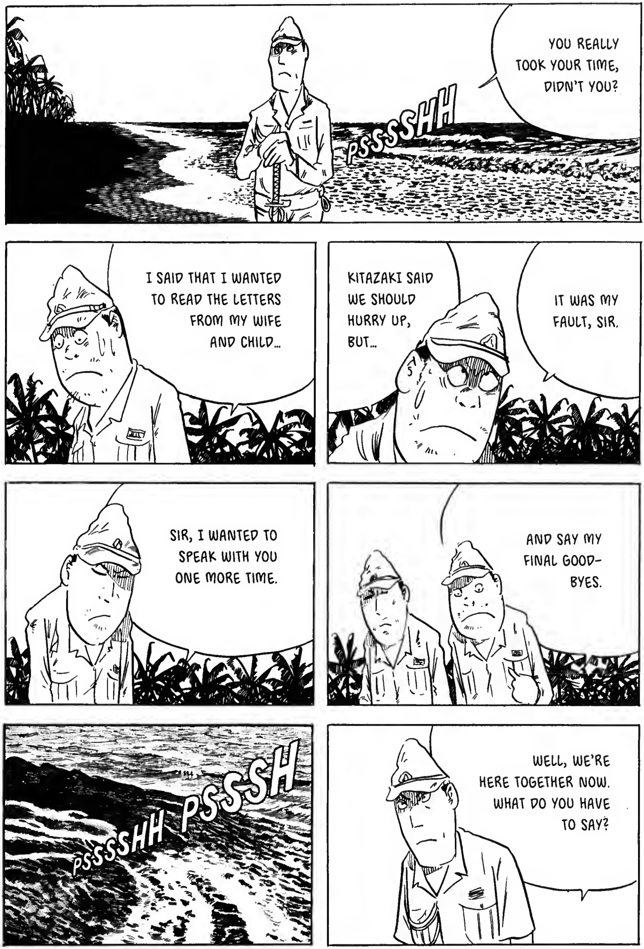

YOU GUYS TAKE CARE, OKAY?
...
WE'LL TELL YOUR FAMILIES HOW COURAGEOUS YOU WERE.
PSSSSHH PSSSSSHH
PSSSSH
IT SEEMS THAT THE TWO LIEUTENANTS HAVE SAID THEIR GOOD-BYES TO THE ENLISTED MEN.
A BIT OF TROUBLE, SIR.
ARE YOU AWAKE, SIR?

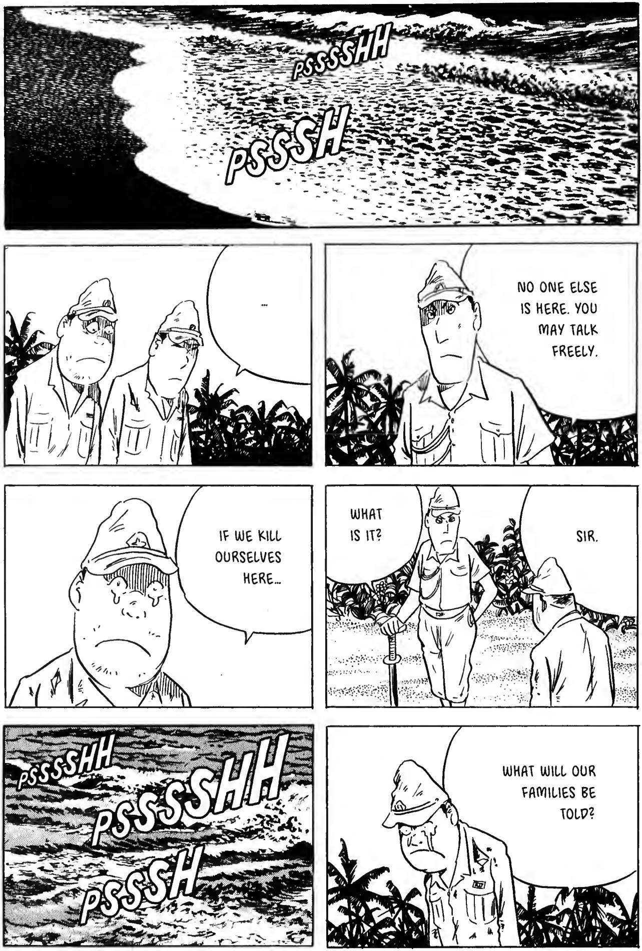

THEY SHOULD'VE COME TO ME FIRST.
SO THE ENLISTED MEN KNOW THEN?
AND NOW THE SUN IS RISING...
PSSSSHH PSSSSHH

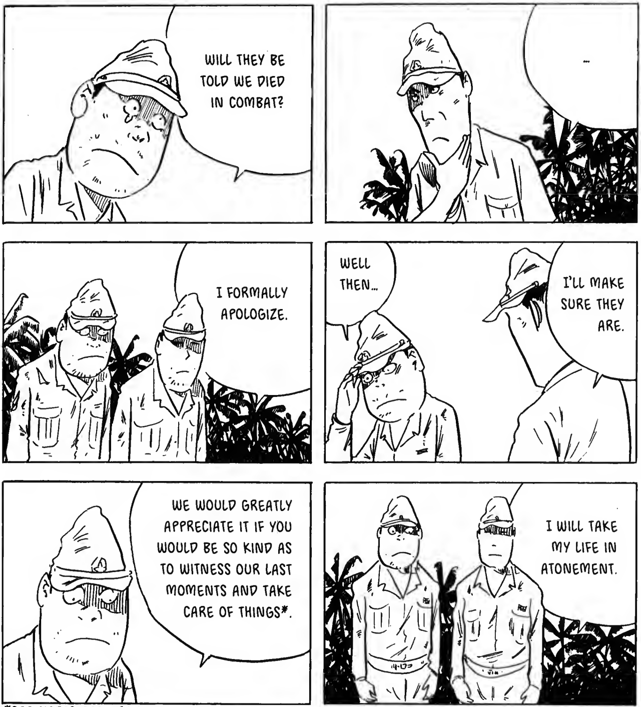

THOSE LETTERS FROM YOUR GIRL?
NO.
FROM MY MOM.
PSSSSHH
PSSSH
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT SUICIDE CHARGE FOR...
WHAT ARE WE KILLING OURSELVES FOR?
JUST SHUT UP, OKAY?


THIS IS OUR DESTINY, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE KICK AND SCREAM, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW.
PSSSH
PSSSSHH PSSSSHH

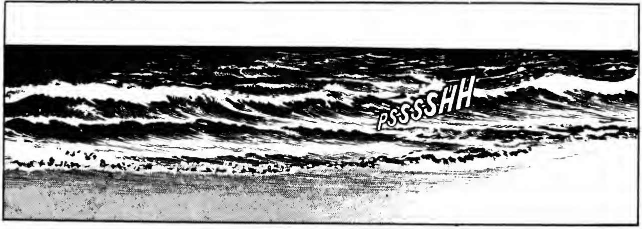

THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT, SIR. LET'S TAKE CARE OF THIS NOW.
THE DAY IS FULLY ON US, ISN'T IT?
PSSSSHH
PSSSH
YES, SIR.
WE NEED TO FIND AN APPROPRIATE PLACE, SOMEWHERE DISCREET.
PSSSSHH PSSSSHH

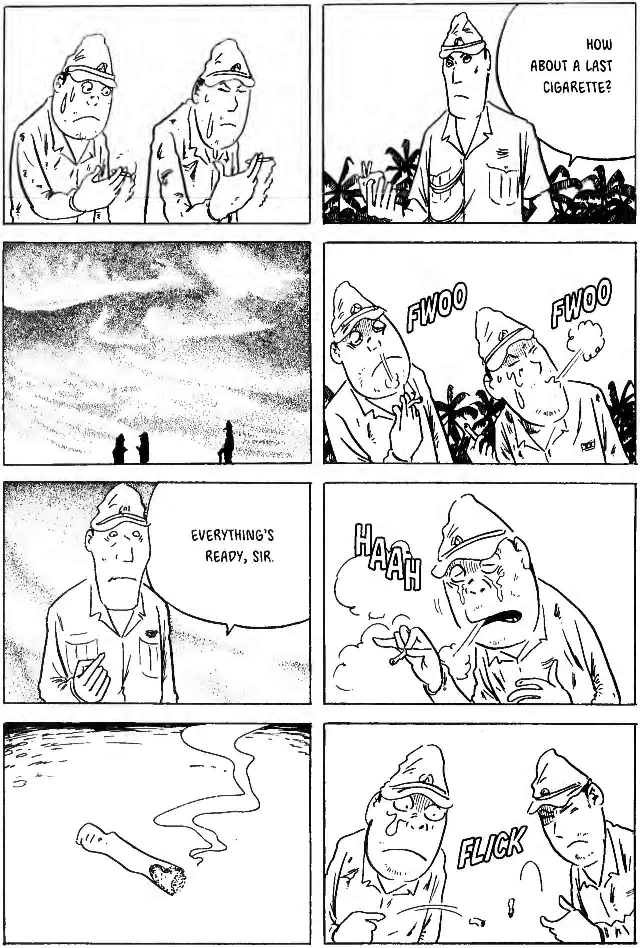

PSSSSHH
YOU REALLY TOOK YOUR TIME, DIDN'T YOU?
I SAID THAT I WANTED TO READ THE LETTERS FROM MY WIFE AND CHILD...
KITAZAKI SAID WE SHOULD HURRY UP, BUT...
IT WAS MY FAULT, SIR.
SIR, I WANTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ONE MORE TIME.
AND SAY MY FINAL GOOD-BYES.
PSSSSHH PSSSH
WELL, WE'RE HERE TOGETHER NOW. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

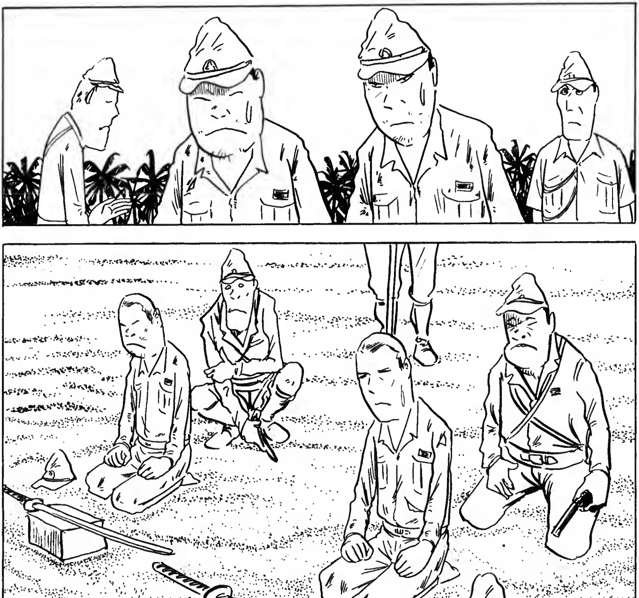

PSSSSHH
PSSSH
NO ONE ELSE IS HERE. YOU MAY TALK FREELY.
...
SIR.
WHAT IS IT?
IF WE KILL OURSELVES HERE...
WHAT WILL OUR FAMILIES BE TOLD?
PSSSSHH
PSSSSHH
PSSSH

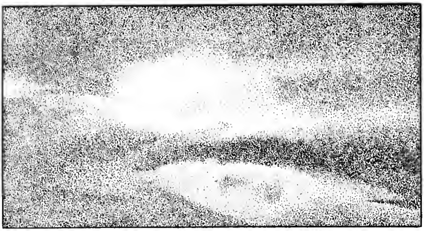

WILL THEY BE TOLD WE DIED IN COMBAT?
…
I FORMALLY APOLOGIZE.
WELL THEN…
I'LL MAKE SURE THEY ARE.
WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO WITNESS OUR LAST MOMENTS AND TAKE CARE OF THINGS*.
I WILL TAKE MY LIFE IN ATONEMENT.

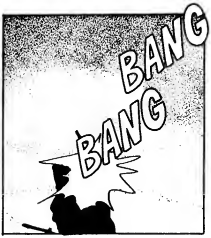
*SEE NOTES PAGE 367.

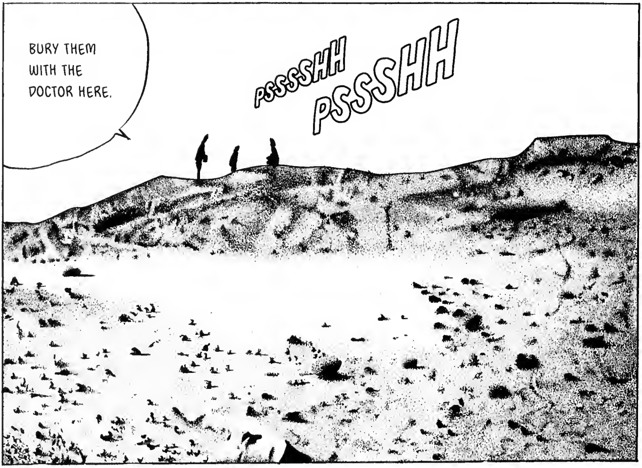



HOW ABOUT A LAST CIGARETTE?
FWOO
FWOO
EVERYTHING'S READY, SIR.
HAAAH
FLICK

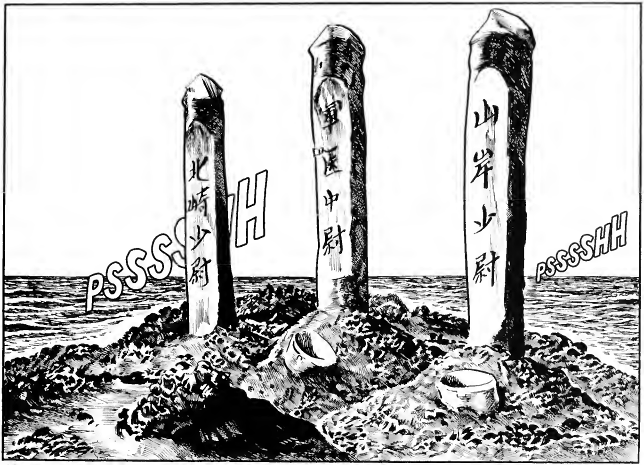

PSSSSHH PSSSSHH
PSSSH



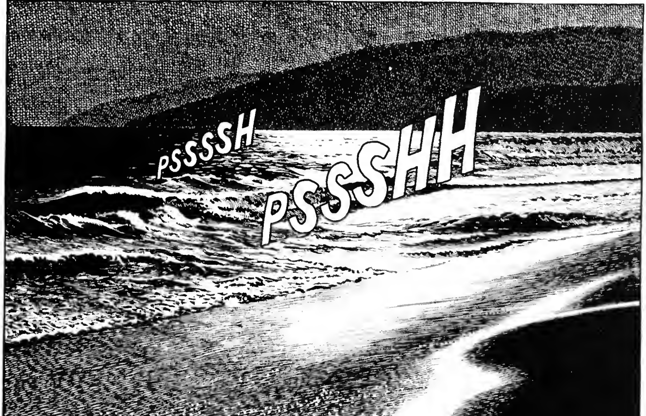

BANG
BANG


BURY THEM WITH THE DOCTOR HERE.
PS-S-S-SHH
PSSSHH

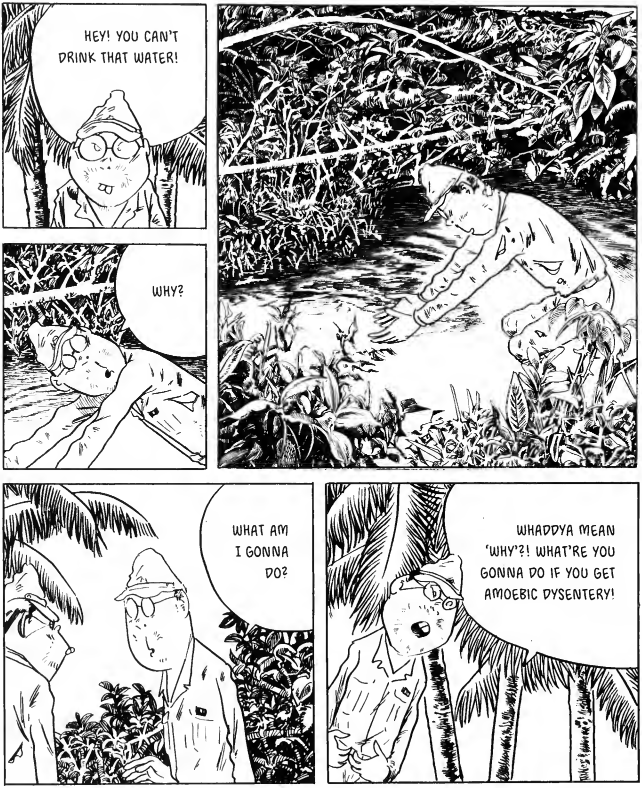
PSSSSHH PSSSSSHH

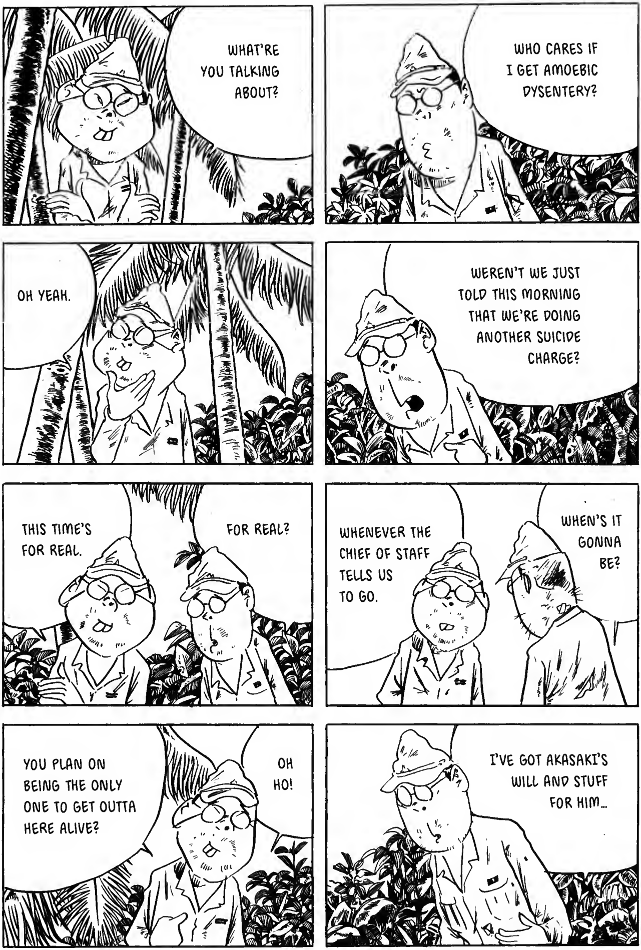

山岸少尉
軍医中尉
北崎少尉
PSSSSHH
PSSSSHH

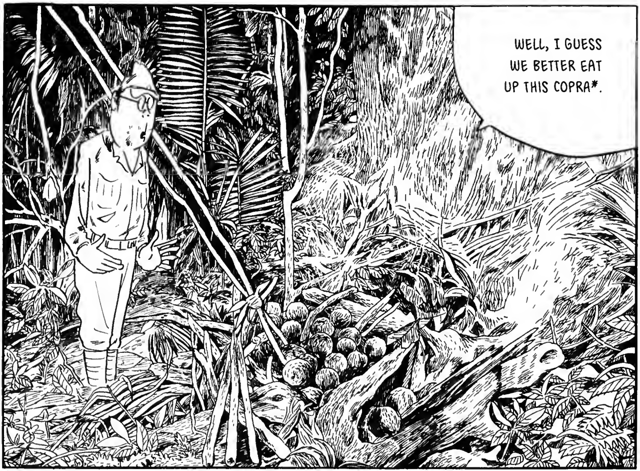
(RIGHT TO LEFT): SECOND LIEUTENANT YAMAGISHI; LIEUTENANT/DOCTOR; SECOND LIEUTENANT KITAZAKI


PSSSSH
PSSSHH

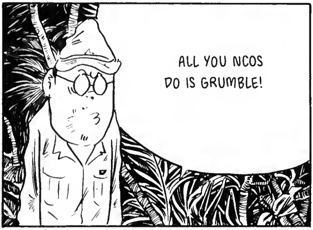
CAPE MASSACRE

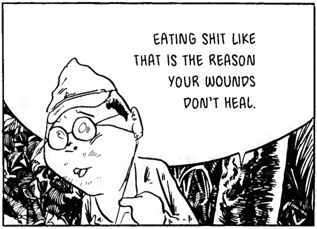

HEY! YOU CAN'T DRINK THAT WATER!
WHY?
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
WHADDYA MEAN 'WHY'?! WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO IF YOU GET AMOEBIC DYSENTERY!

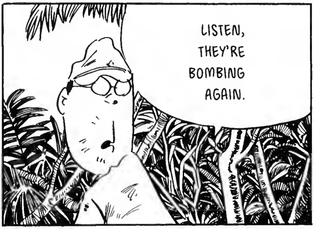

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHO CARES IF I GET AMOEBIC DYSENTERY?
OH YEAH.
WEREN'T WE JUST TOLD THIS MORNING THAT WE'RE DOING ANOTHER SUICIDE CHARGE?
THIS TIME'S FOR REAL.
FOR REAL?
WHENEVER THE CHIEF OF STAFF TELLS US TO GO.
WHEN'S IT GONNA BE?
YOU PLAN ON BEING THE ONLY ONE TO GET OUTTA HERE ALIVE?
OH HO!
I'VE GOT AKASAKI'S WILL AND STUFF FOR HIM...

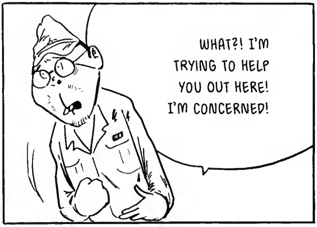

WELL, I GUESS WE BETTER EAT UP THIS COPRA*.

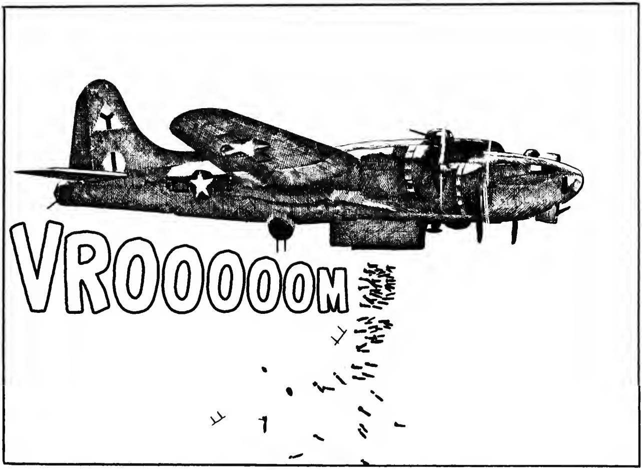
*THE DRIED MEAT OF THE COCONUT.

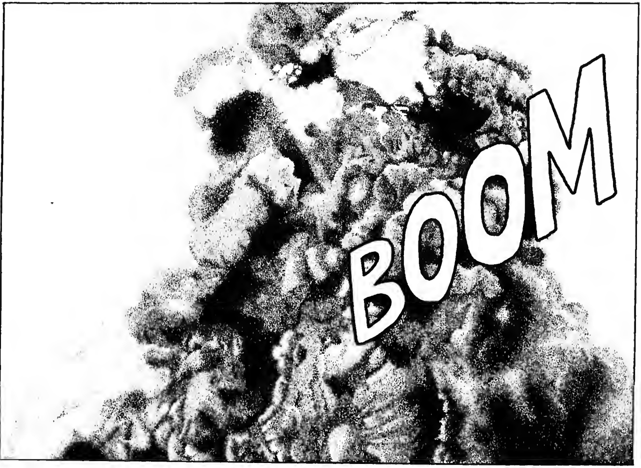

ALL YOU NCOS DO IS GRUMBLE!

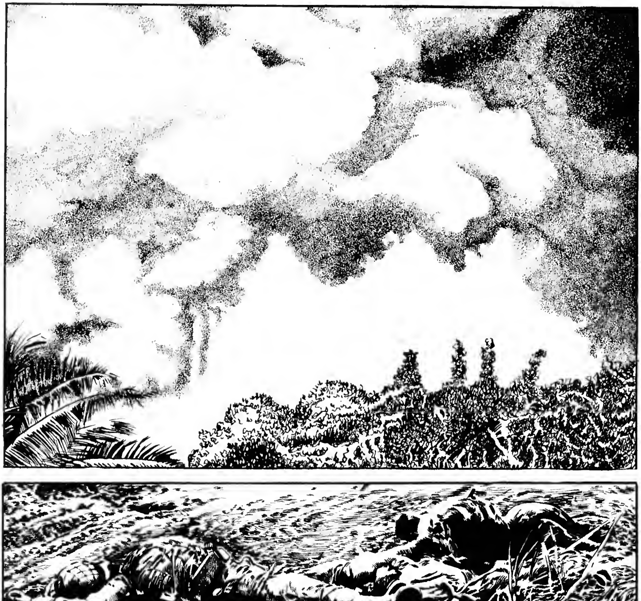

EATING SHIT LIKE THAT IS THE REASON YOUR WOUNDS DON'T HEAL.

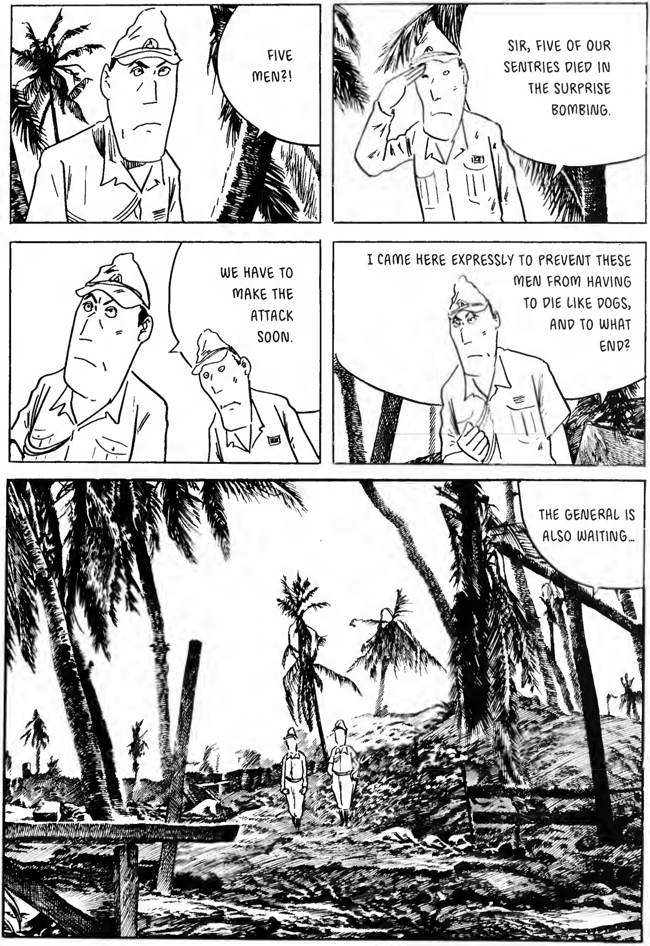

LISTEN, THEY'RE BOMBING AGAIN.

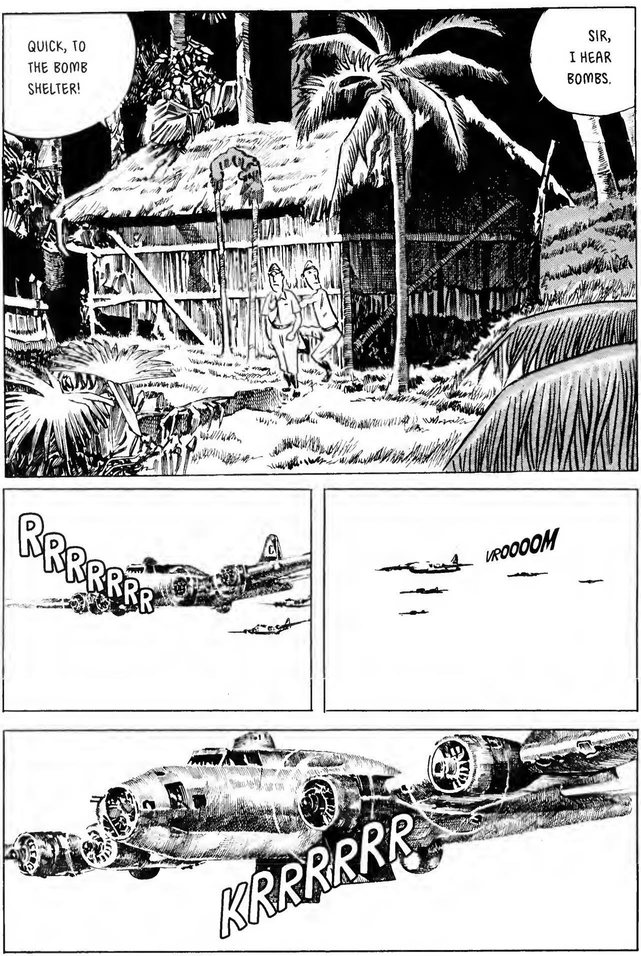

WHAT?! I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU OUT HERE! I'M CONCERNED!

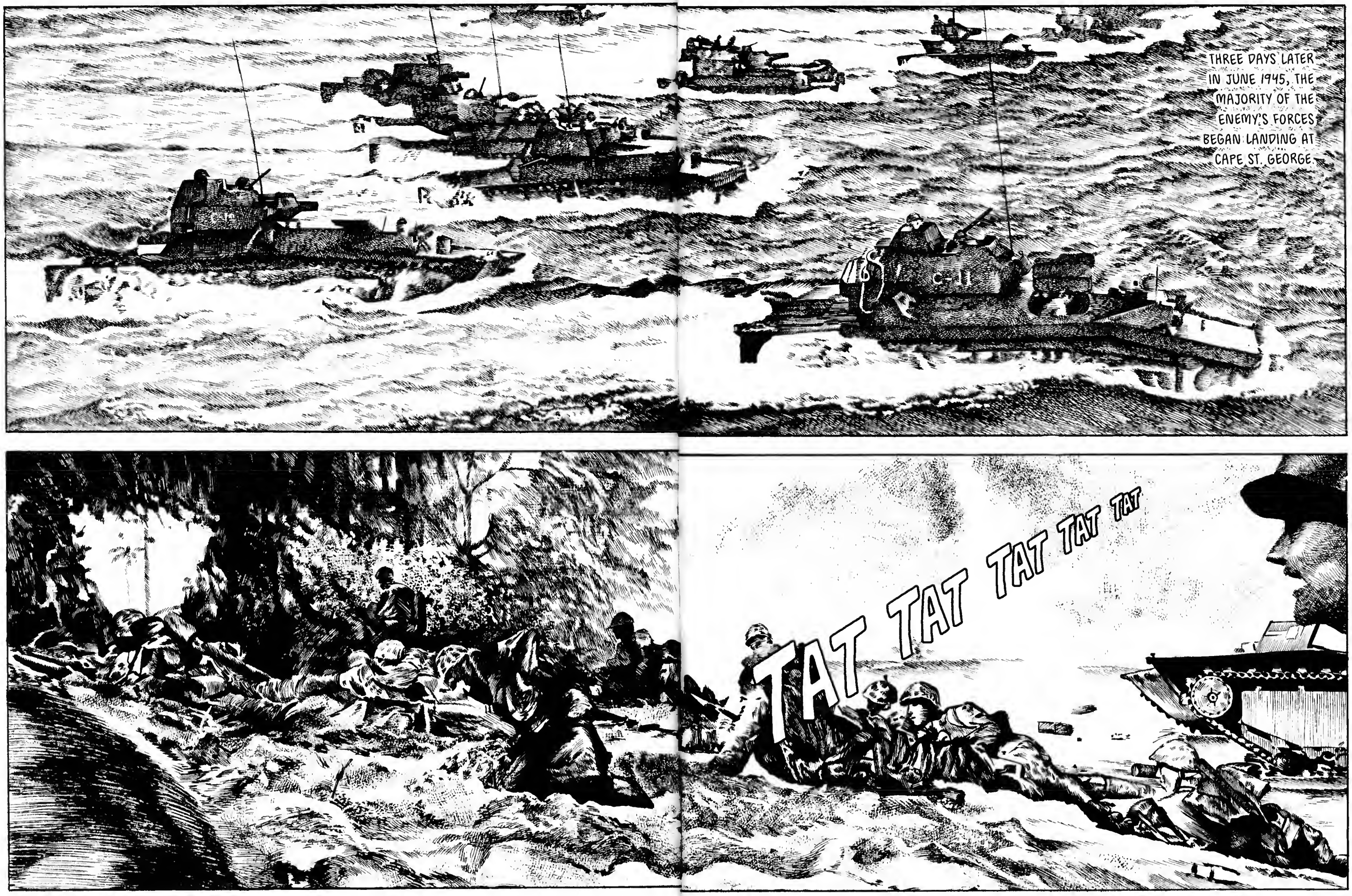

VROOOOOM

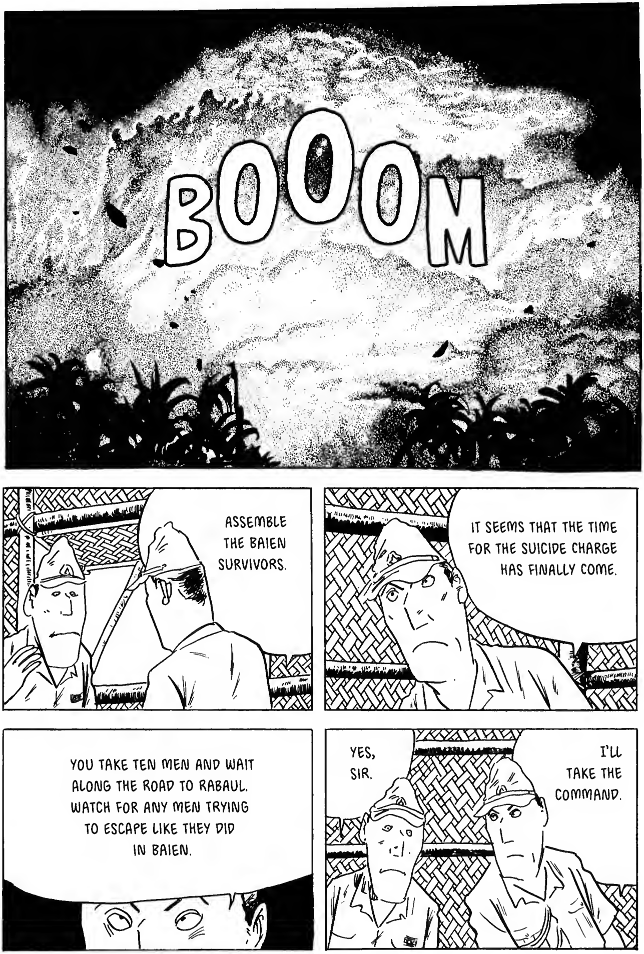

BOOM

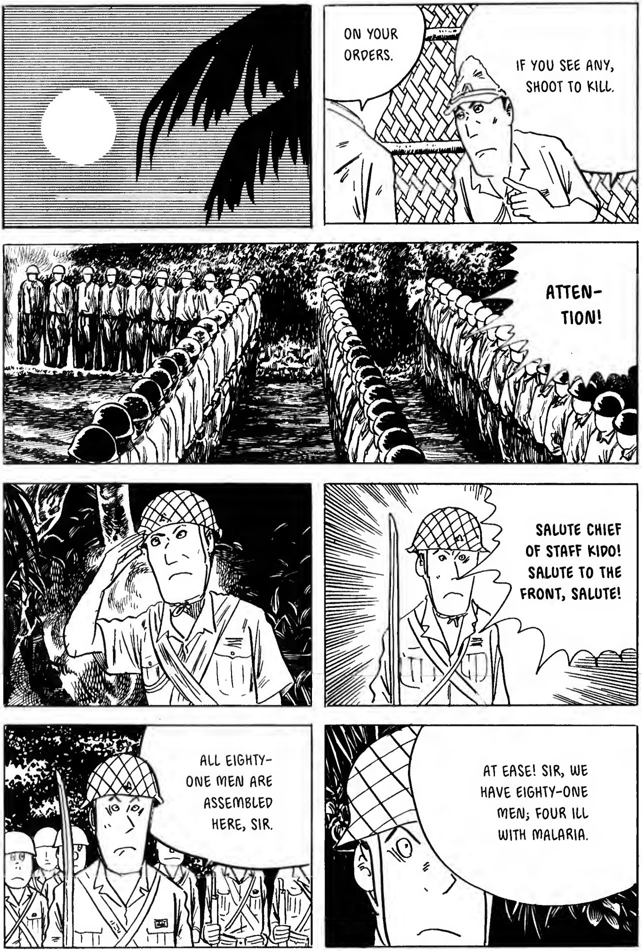


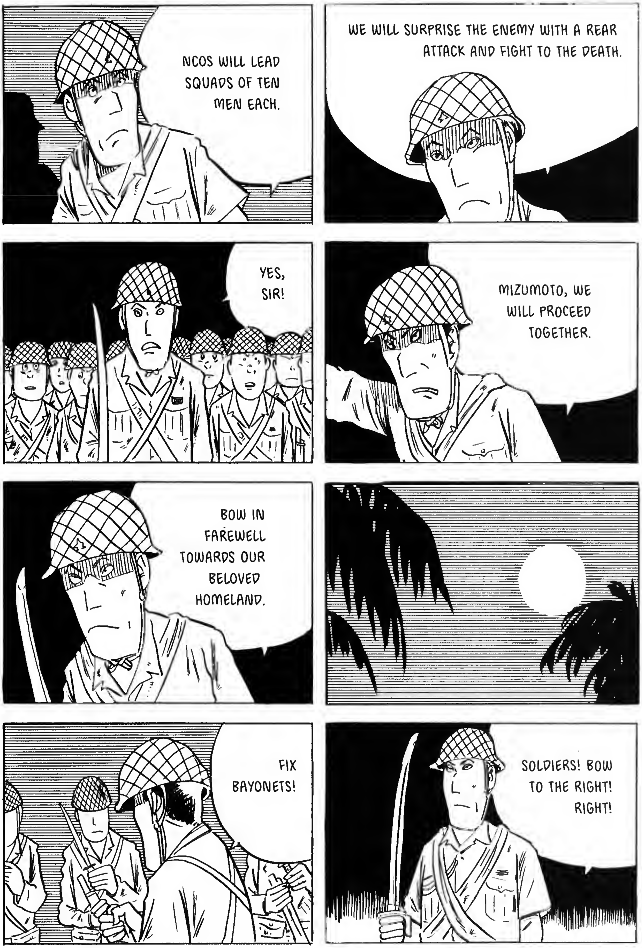

FIVE MEN?!
SIR, FIVE OF OUR SENTRIES DIED IN THE SURPRISE BOMBING.
WE HAVE TO MAKE THE ATTACK SOON.
I CAME HERE EXPRESSLY TO PREVENT THESE MEN FROM HAVING TO DIE LIKE DOGS, AND TO WHAT END?
THE GENERAL IS ALSO WAITING...

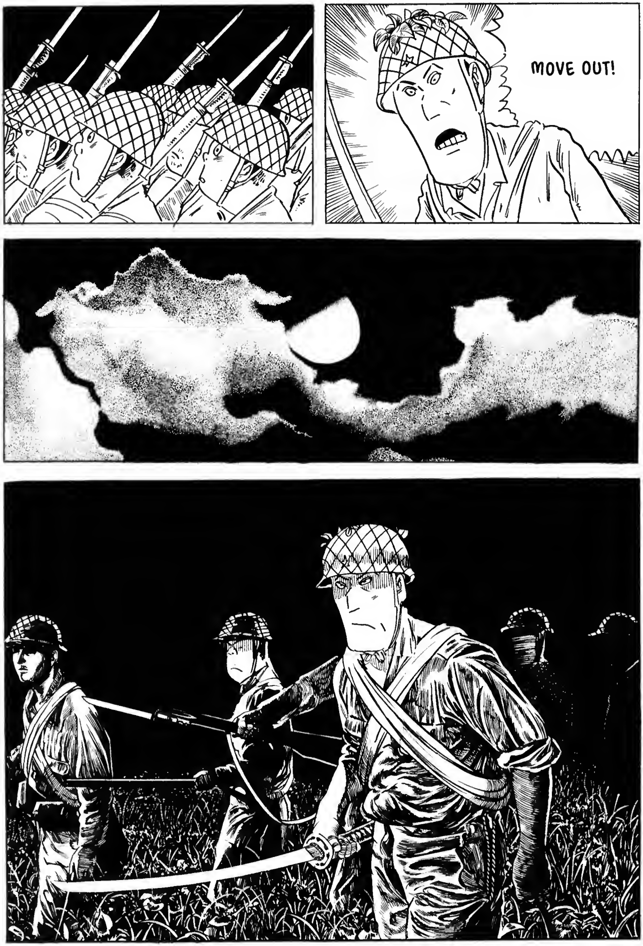

SIR, I HEAR BOMBS.
QUICK, TO THE BOMB SHELTER!
VROOOOM
RRRRRRRR
KRRRRRRR

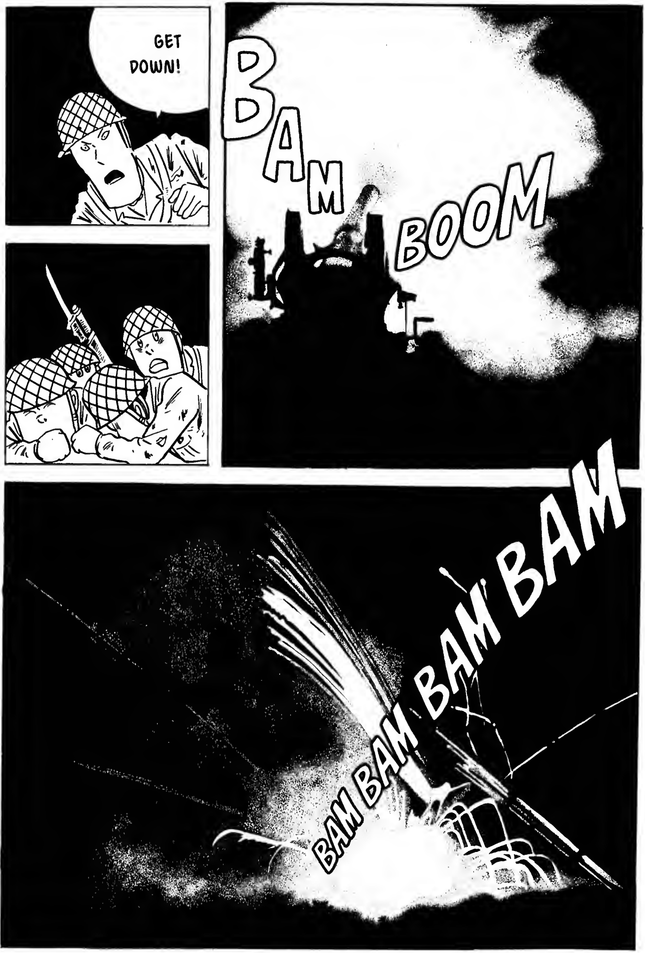

THREE DAYS LATER IN JUNE 1945, THE MAJORITY OF THE ENEMY'S FORCES BEGAN LANDING AT CAPE ST. GEORGE.
TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT

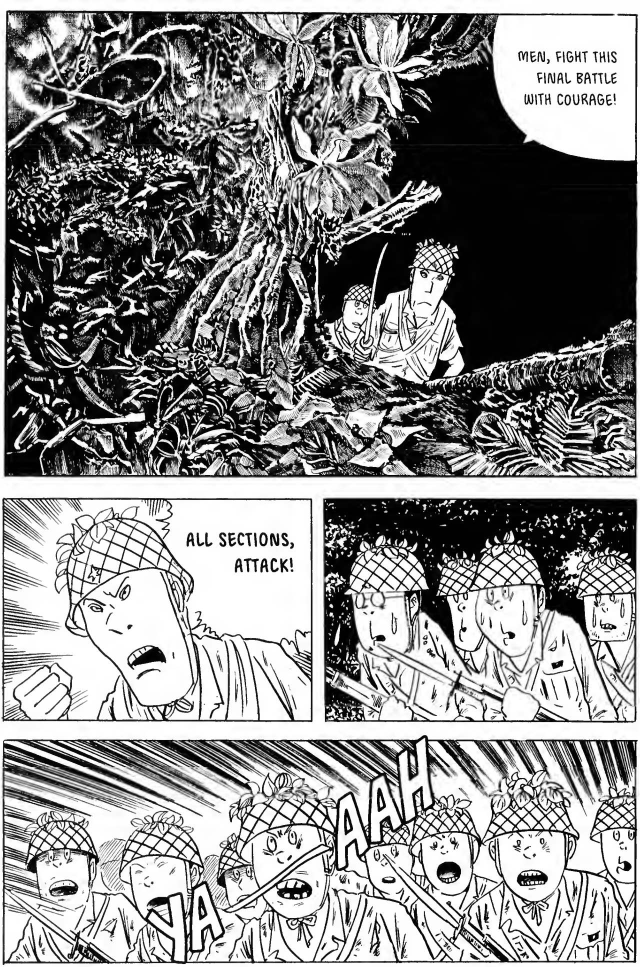

BOOOM
ASSEMBLE THE BAIEN SURVIVORS.
IT SEEMS THAT THE TIME FOR THE SUICIDE CHARGE HAS FINALLY COME.
YOU TAKE TEN MEN AND WAIT ALONG THE ROAD TO RABAUL. WATCH FOR ANY MEN TRYING TO ESCAPE LIKE THEY DID IN BAIEN.
YES, SIR.
I'LL TAKE THE COMMAND.

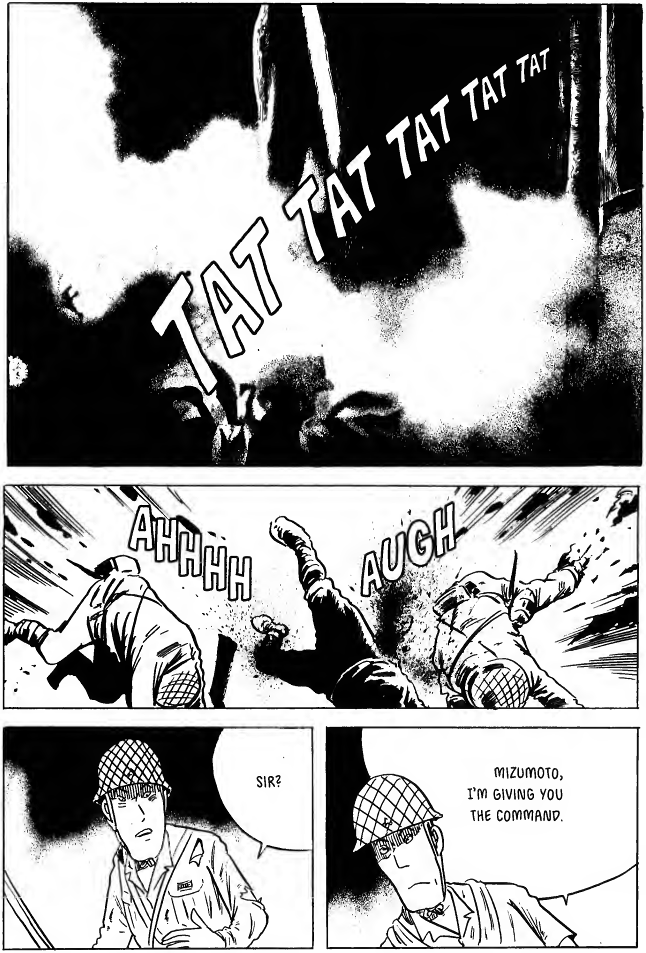

ON YOUR ORDERS.
IF YOU SEE ANY, SHOOT TO KILL.
ATTENTION!
SALUTE CHIEF OF STAFF KIDO! SALUTE TO THE FRONT, SALUTE!
ALL EIGHTY-ONE MEN ARE ASSEMBLED HERE, SIR.
AT EASE! SIR, WE HAVE EIGHTY-ONE MEN; FOUR ILL WITH MALARIA.

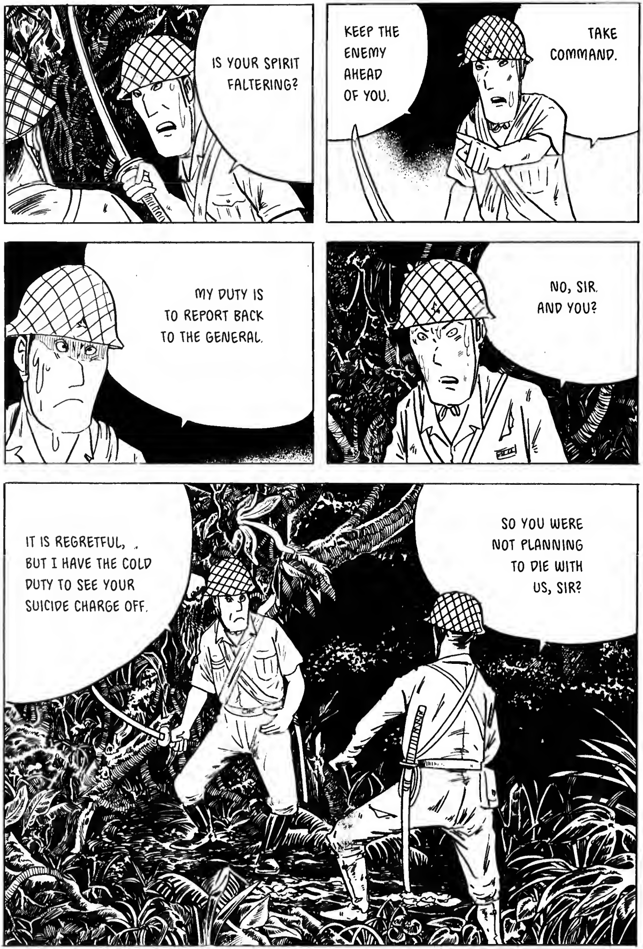

NCOS WILL LEAD SQUADS OF TEN MEN EACH.
WE WILL SURPRISE THE ENEMY WITH A REAR ATTACK AND FIGHT TO THE DEATH.
YES, SIR!
MIZUMOTO, WE WILL PROCEED TOGETHER.
BOW IN FAREWELL TOWARDS OUR BELOVED HOMELAND.
FIX BAYONETS!
SOLDIERS! BOW TO THE RIGHT! RIGHT!

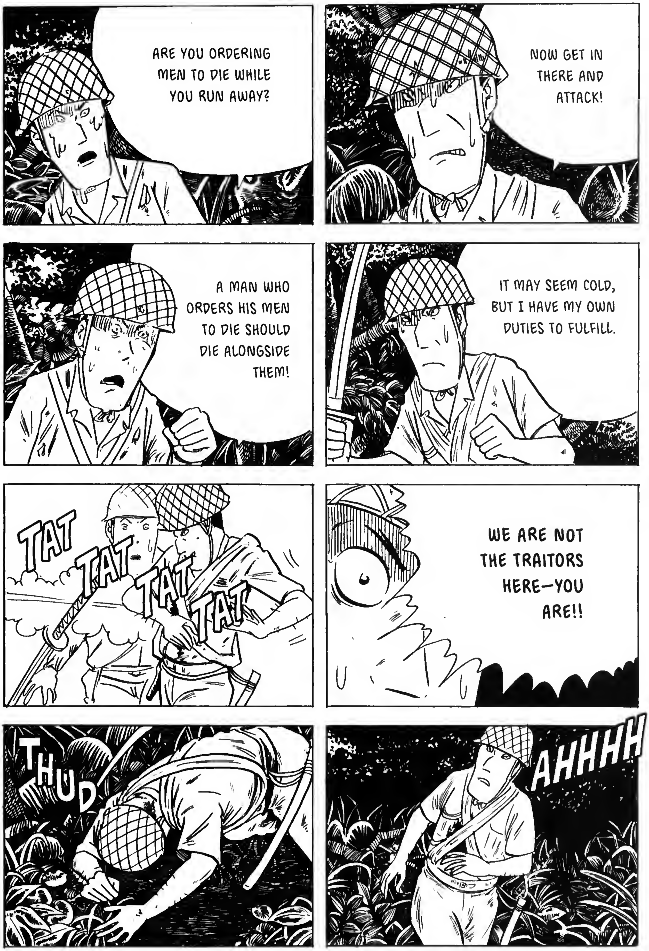

MOVE OUT!

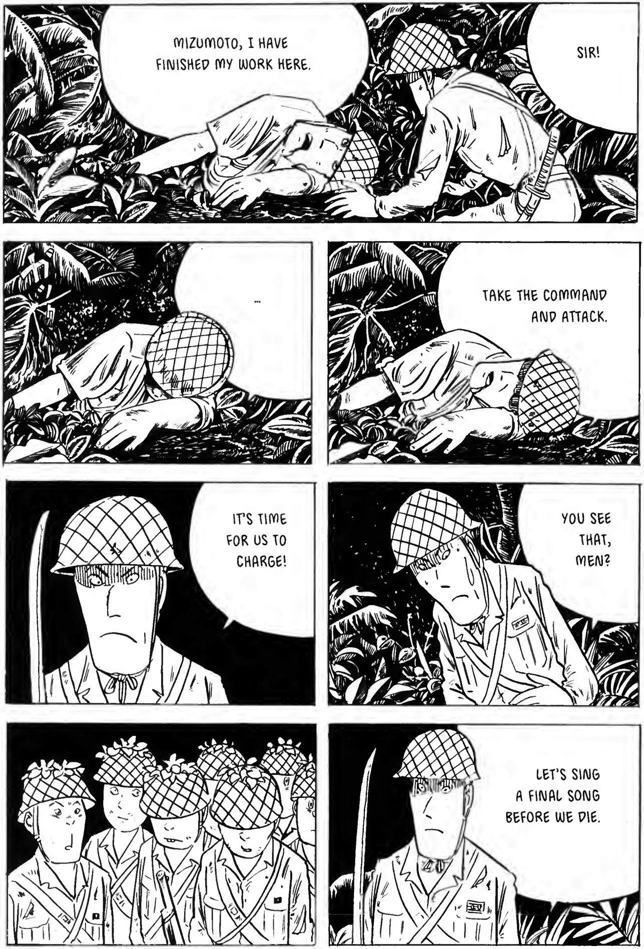

GET DOWN!
BAM
BOOM
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM

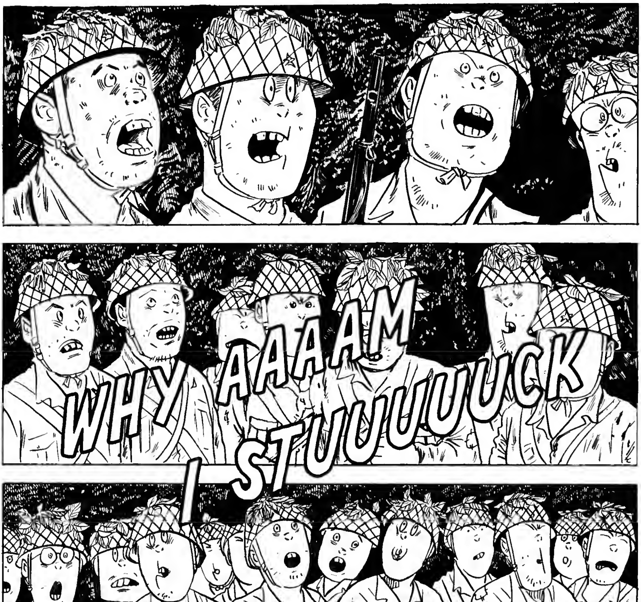

MEN, FIGHT THIS FINAL BATTLE WITH COURAGE!
ALL SECTIONS, ATTACK!
YA
AAH

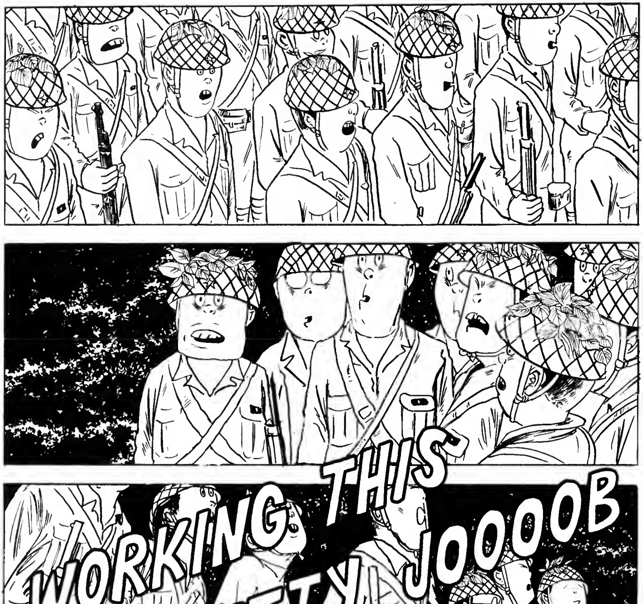

TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT
AHHHH
AUGH
SIR?
MIZUMOTO, I'M GIVING YOU THE COMMAND.

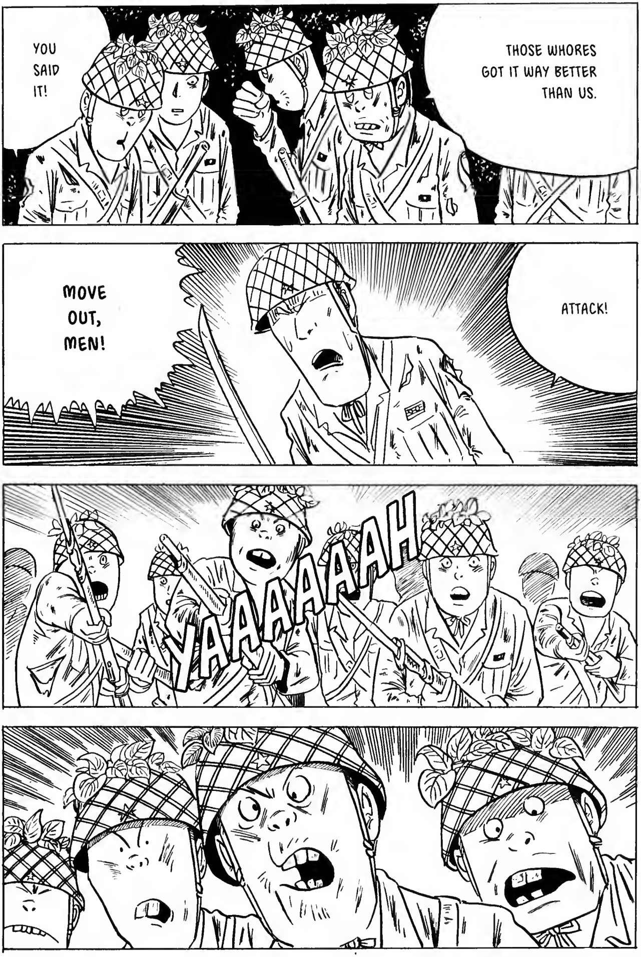

TAKE COMMAND.
KEEP THE ENEMY AHEAD OF YOU.
IS YOUR SPIRIT FALTERING?
NO, SIR. AND YOU?
MY DUTY IS TO REPORT BACK TO THE GENERAL.
SO YOU WERE NOT PLANNING TO DIE WITH US, SIR?
IT IS REGRETFUL, BUT I HAVE THE COLD DUTY TO SEE YOUR SUICIDE CHARGE OFF.

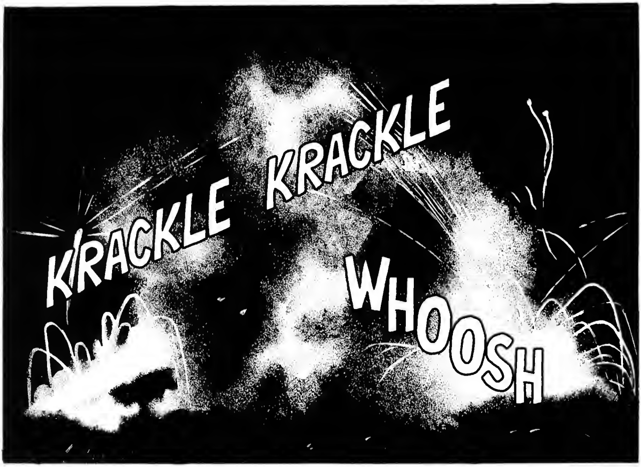

ARE YOU ORDERING MEN TO DIE WHILE YOU RUN AWAY?
NOW GET IN THERE AND ATTACK!
A MAN WHO ORDERS HIS MEN TO DIE SHOULD DIE ALONGSIDE THEM!
IT MAY SEEM COLD, BUT I HAVE MY OWN DUTIES TO FULFILL.
TAT TAT TAT TAT
WE ARE NOT THE TRAITORS HERE—YOU ARE!!
THUD
AHHHH

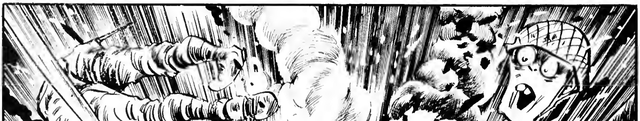

MIZUMOTO, I HAVE FINISHED MY WORK HERE.
SIR!
...
TAKE THE COMMAND AND ATTACK.
IT'S TIME FOR US TO CHARGE!
YOU SEE THAT, MEN?
LET'S SING A FINAL SONG BEFORE WE DIE.

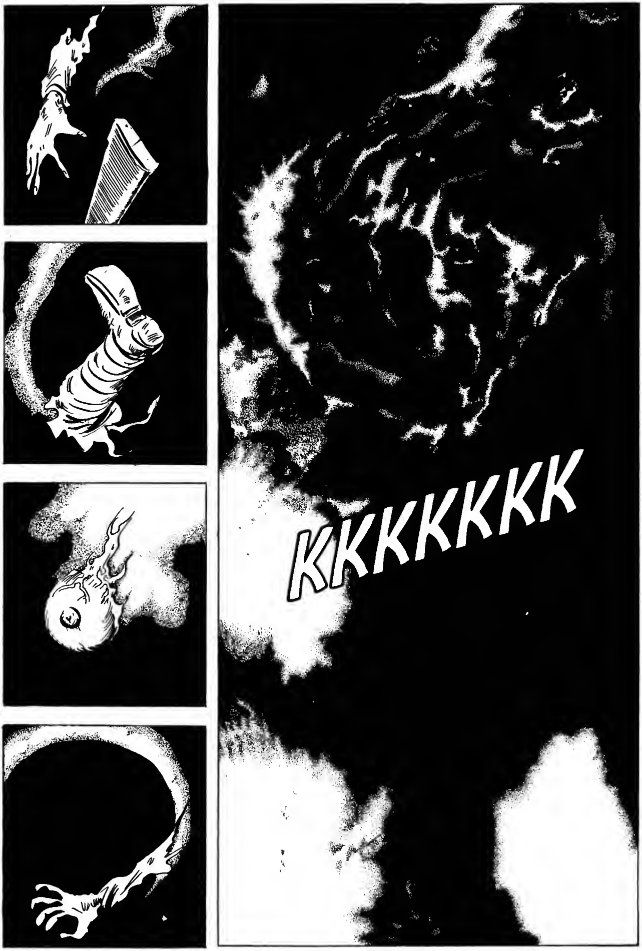

WHY AAAAM I STUUUUUCK

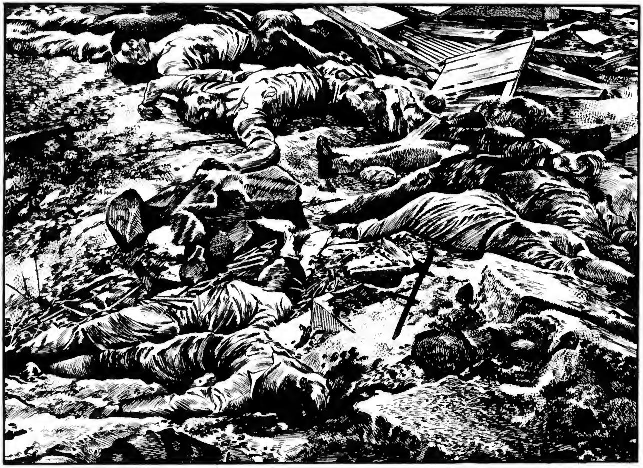

WORKING THIS SHITTY JOOOOB

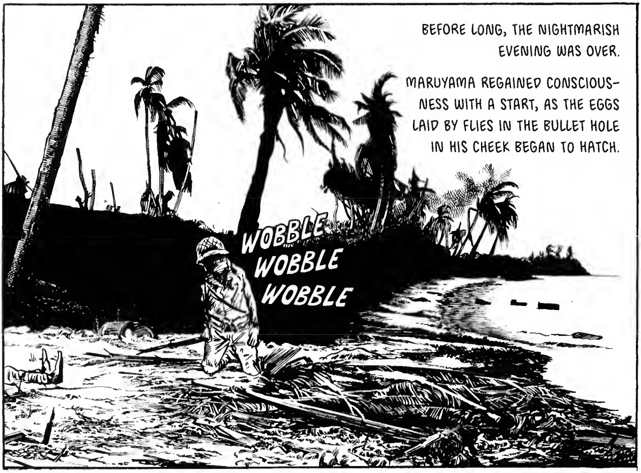

THOSE WHORES GOT IT WAY BETTER THAN US.
YOU SAID IT!
ATTACK!
MOVE OUT, MEN!
YAAAAAAAH

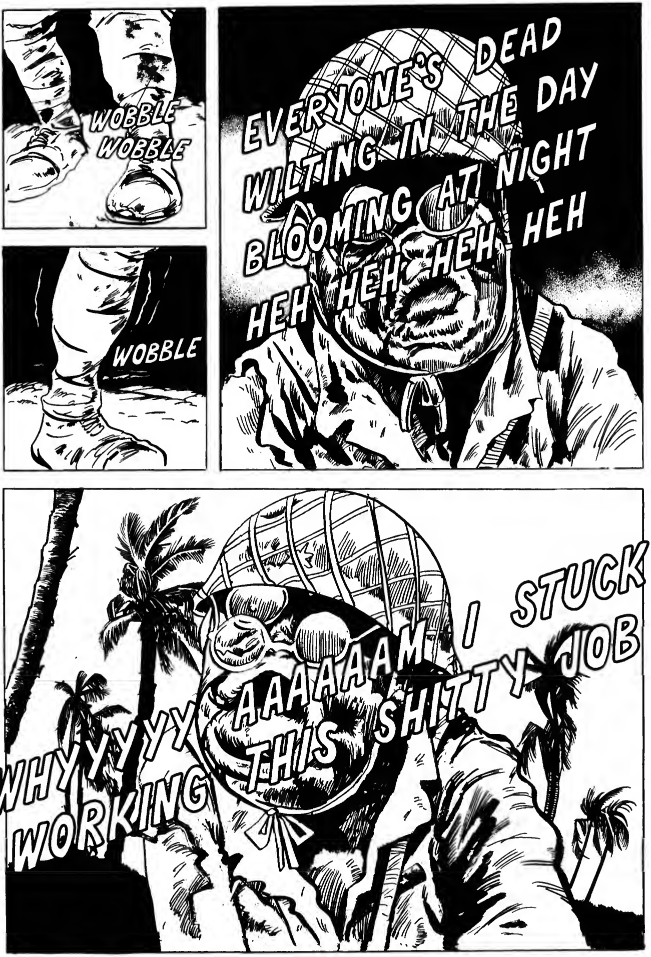

KRACKLE
KRACKLE
KRACKLE
WHOOSH

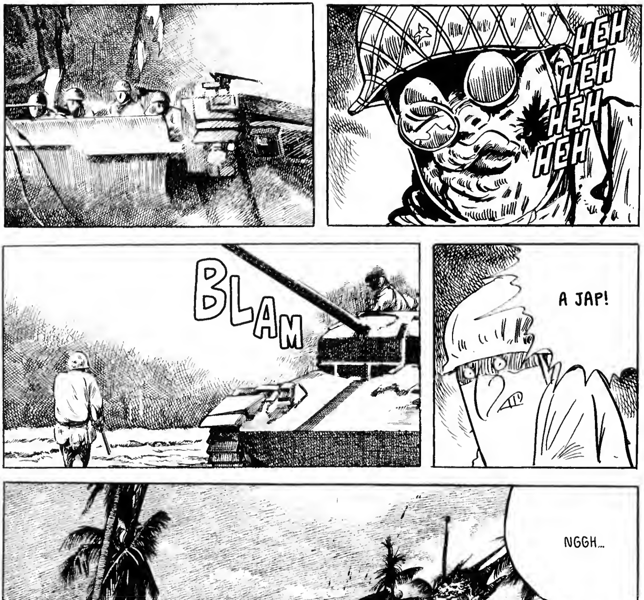

BOOM

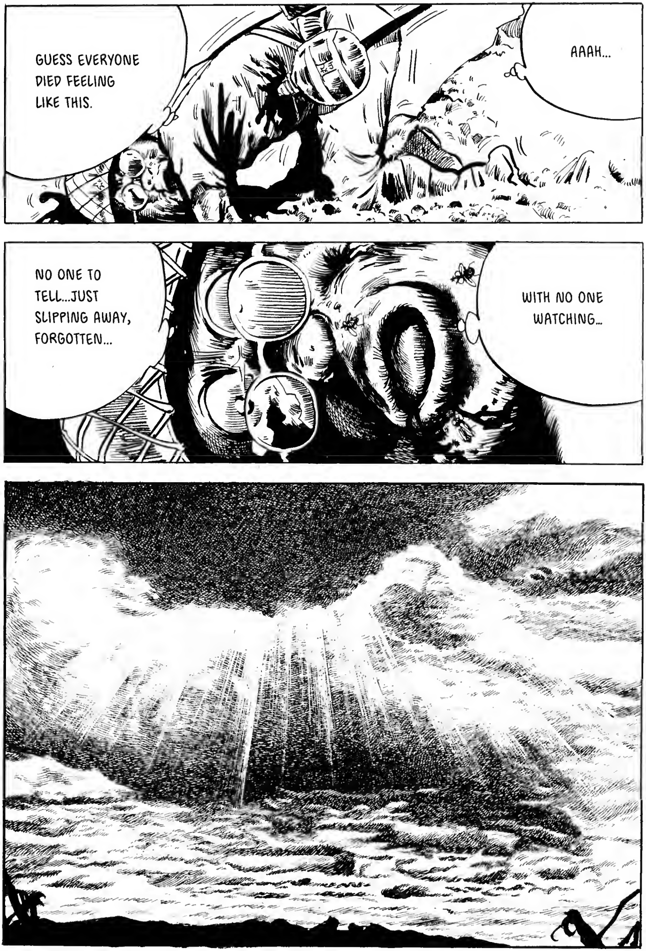

KKKKKKK

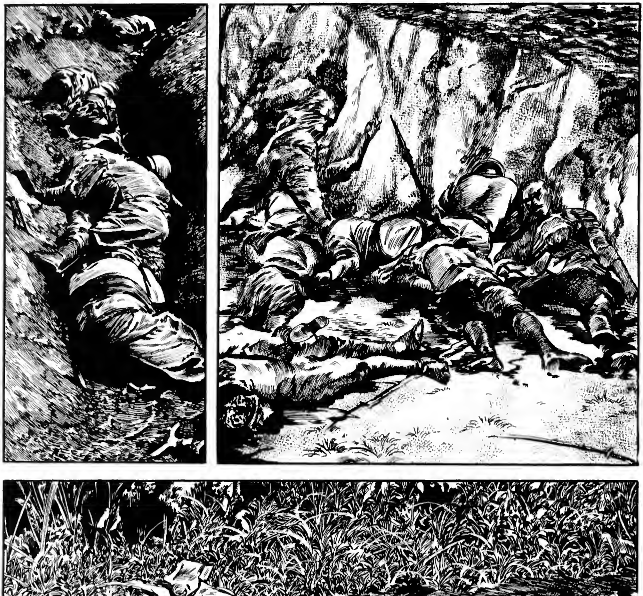


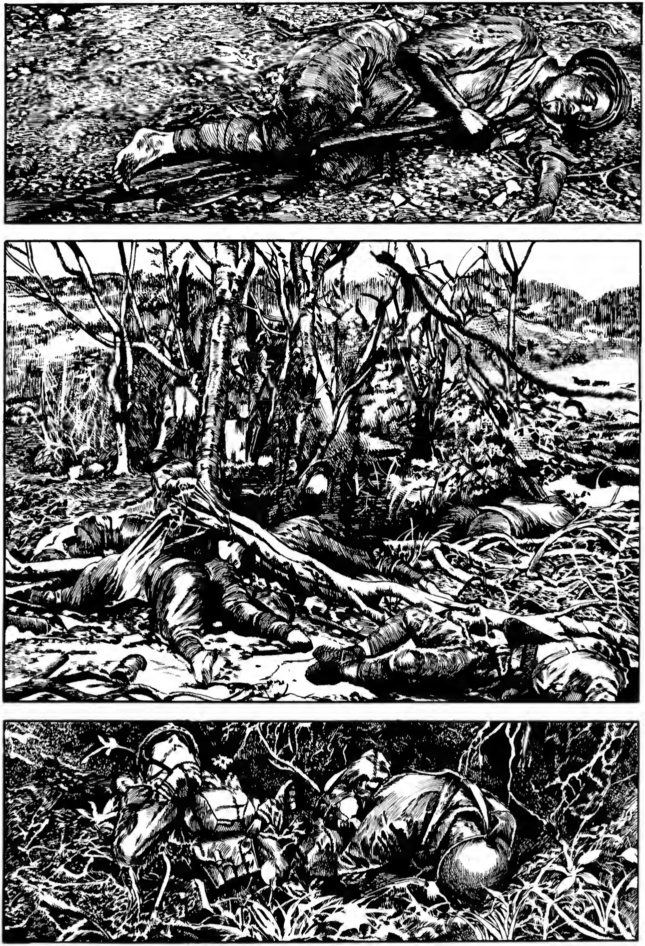

BEFORE LONG, THE NIGHTMARISH EVENING WAS OVER.
MARUYAMA REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS WITH A START, AS THE EGGS LAID BY FLIES IN THE BULLET HOLE IN HIS CHEEK BEGAN TO HATCH.
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
WOBBLE

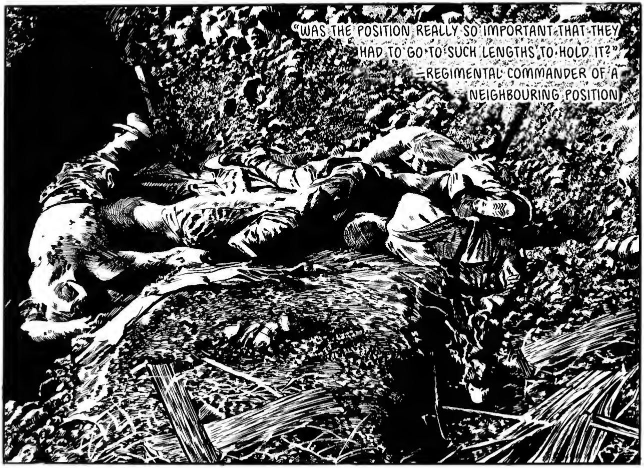

WOBBLE WOBBLE
WOBBLE
EVERYONE'S DEAD
WILTING IN THE DAY
BLOOMING AT NIGHT
HEH HEH HEH HEH
WHYYYYY AAAAAAM I STUCK
WORKING THIS SHITTY JOB

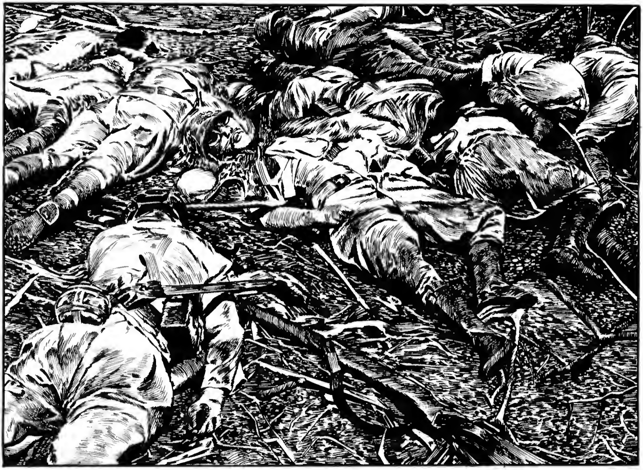

HEH HEH HEH HEH
BLAM
A JAP!
NGGH…


GUESS EVERYONE DIED FEELING LIKE THIS.
AAAH...
NO ONE TO TELL...JUST SLIPPING AWAY, FORGOTTEN...
WITH NO ONE WATCHING...






"WAS THE POSITION REALLY SO IMPORTANT THAT THEY HAD TO GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO HOLD IT?"
—REGIMENTAL COMMANDER OF A NEIGHBOURING POSITION



NOTES

29: Dai-Nanko was the name given to the 14th century samurai Masashige Kusunoki when he was taken up as a patriotic hero after the Meiji Restoration. He was used as an inspiration for suicide missions during World War II due to the fact that he sacrificed his life for the sake of Emperor Go-Daigo. The Battle of Minato River was a decisive battle which Kusunoki lost, leading him to commit suicide.

46: New Year's, or *Oshogatsu*, is possibly the most important holiday in Japan. It is a time to spend with family, much like Christmas in Western countries, with businesses and shops traditionally closed for the first three days of the year.

51: These cards, *hanafuda*, are a type of traditional Japanese playing cards. One set is made up of four cards featuring flowers for each of the twelve months of the year, for a total of forty-eight cards. Interestingly, the game company Nintendo originally formed to produce *hanafuda* cards.

59: Hokkaido is the Japanese island north of the main island of Honshu. The indigenous Ainu people there generally have more hair and lighter skin than other Japanese people, and have been discriminated against within Japan for centuries.

77: The Martin B-26 Marauder was an American World War II bomber manufactured by the Glenn L. Martin Company. The type's first combat mission was a raid on the Japanese base at Rabaul on April 5, 1942. Some of the Marauders operating in the South Pacific were fitted with an additional machine gun in the nose.

85: The military police, or *Kempeitai*, were the bane of many Japanese people's existence during World War II. Known as the Gestapo of Japan, the *Kempeitai* brutalized Allied prisoners and captured foreign women to serve as "comfort women" in Japanese brothels, but they also kept tight watch on the Japanese people themselves, harshly punishing even the slightest infractions.

108: This is a World War II army song. *Hanami* refers to flower-viewing parties, in particular to cherry blossom (*sakura*) viewing parties. Every spring, Japanese people go to parks to sit under the flowering trees and eat and drink and generally enjoy the delicate blossoms.

115: According to Japanese Buddhist tradition, the Sanzu River, similar to the River Styx in Greek mythology, separates the land of the living from the spirit world. The deceased must cross this river after death, but the manner of crossing varies with the life they led.

122: Burdock root (*gobou*), a popular winter vegetable in Japan, is tough and woody when raw, but soft and sweet when cooked. It is said that when prisoners of war in Japan were given burdock to eat, they thought the Japanese were feeding them wood.

125: Amitabha Buddha is the principal figure in the Jodo Buddhism sect popular in Japan. In Jodo Buddhism, a strong belief in the Amitabha Buddha is considered the key to salvation, and calling the Buddha's name over and over is believed to summon the Buddha to one's aid.

204: "Noble death" is the Japanese *gyokusai*, which is also the "Noble Deaths" of the title, *Soin gyokusai seyo! Gyokusai* is made up of the Japanese characters for "jewel" and "shattered," and became a euphemism for suicide attack during World War II. A more literal translation of *Soin gyokusai seyo!* would be "All hands, let's die honorably," with the idea that an honorable death was only found on the battlefield. Superior officers exhorted their soldiers with this phrase during the last phases of the war, when a Japanese defeat was becoming clear. Japanese soldiers were strictly instructed to die rather than be taken prisoner.

218: Harbin is a city in Northeastern China which was occupied by the Japanese during World War II. The city is in a province that borders Russia and, at the time, had a large Russian population.

221: *Kapporé* is a type of dance that originated near the end of the Edo Period. The final vowel here is changed from "ay" to "ee" to follow the rhyme scheme in the Japanese version.

223: This is a poem by Edo period writer Motoori Norinaga taken by Imperial Army soldiers as inspiration in World War II. "Yamato spirit" is the nationalistic ideal of the Japanese spirit and was often referred to during World War II.

245: The date of a person's death is very important in Japanese culture due to the various observances that must be carried out on specific dates after death. These observances depend on local customs, but are often held on the seventh day after death, then the forty-ninth, and then the hundredth day, followed by annual services or services in set years.

326: In this kind of ritual suicide, the person committing suicide is generally expected to cut his abdomen while a second, or *kaishakunin*, stands behind him to finish the job so that the person committing suicide does not suffer unduly. Traditionally, this second cuts off the head of the suicide victim in a ritualized manner, but in modern times, the second usually shoots the suicide victim in the head.

AFTERWORD

SHIGERU MIZUKI

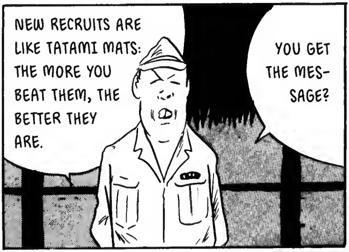
SUCH LENGTHS TO HOLD THAT PLACE...

Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths is 90 percent fact. The narrative has the chief of staff hit by a stray bullet and dying, and that is not true—he escaped quite handily at just the right moment. And in the story, everyone dies, but in reality, about eighty men survived.

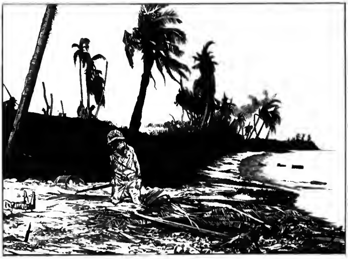
You can't say to some members of a detachment, "We're all going to die later, so you guys go ahead and die now." No one would willingly accept that. I suppose all *gyokusai*, or suicide charges, are like this; there are always survivors. But the thing is, on Peleliu*, almost no one survived, so that became the standard. Those of us in Rabaul were often told to model ourselves after Peleliu. And if we had been on an island like Peleliu where everyone could die all at once, our suicide charge would have succeeded. But in the case of Rabaul, with a hundred thousand soldiers living quite comfortably at the rear, you can tell five hundred soldiers (maybe three or four hundred in reality) on the front to die, but you definitely won't get those five hundred men to consent to that.

In our military, soldiers and socks were consumables; a soldier ranked no higher than a cat. But when it came to death, it turns out we were human beings after all. "Even a worm will turn," as the old saying goes, and I believe that a suicide charge simply can't succeed without the tacit agreement of every soldier in the group.

Our newly assigned 27-year-old battalion commander may have been a wonderful guy when you got to know him, but he was much too young to command nearly five hundred men, each with his own individual will. The "chief of staff" was the one who gave the commander this order, rather than leaving him to come up with a suicide charge on his own, likely because the division commander above him was planning to tell the hundred thousand Rabaul soldiers, "Die here," and he intended to turn us into an example.


NEW RECRUITS ARE LIKE TATAMI MATS: THE MORE YOU BEAT THEM, THE BETTER THEY ARE.
YOU GET THE MESSAGE?

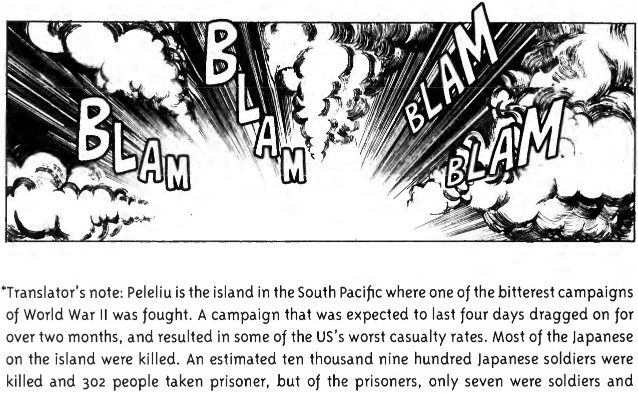
Officers, NCOs, horses, soldiers: in the military hierarchy, soldiers were not even thought of as human beings. We were instead creatures lower than a horse. I wonder if surviving the suicide charge wasn't, rather than an act of cowardice, one final act of resistance as a human being.



In this story, everyone dies in the end, but I originally wanted one soldier to escape and report to the commander of the regiment holding the neighboring position. But it would have gotten too long, so I had everyone die in the suicide charge. The general in charge of the third mixed regiment actually said this about our suicide charge: "Why did they have to go to such lengths to hold that place?" All I could do when I heard this was heave an empty sigh. Such lengths to hold that place... What vain words these are, the dead have no mouths to tell.

Whenever I write a story about the war, I can't help the blind rage that surges up in me. My guess is, this anger is inspired by the ghosts of all those fallen soldiers.

Shigeru Mizuki
August 1991



*Translator's note: Peleliu is the island in the South Pacific where one of the bitterest campaigns of World War II was fought. A campaign that was expected to last four days dragged on for over two months, and resulted in some of the US's worst casualty rates. Most of the Japanese on the island were killed. An estimated ten thousand nine hundred Japanese soldiers were killed and 302 people taken prisoner, but of the prisoners, only seven were soldiers and twelve sailors. The rest were non-Japanese labourers.

Q&A WITH SHIGERU MIZUKI

This written interview was conducted in February 2011, a month before Shigeru Mizuki's 89th birthday, with the invaluable assistance of Maki Hakui, Christopher Butcher, and Jocelyne Allen.

Drawn & Quarterly: You've used your cartooning and status to address the war, starting with themes in *Akuma-kun*, and moving to aggressively criticizing Japan's role in World War II, and war in general. What prompted you to begin directly addressing Japan's role in the war with your manga?

Shigeru Mizuki: I've drawn a variety of war manga, but with *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths*, what prompted me was the feeling that I wanted to leave a record of this significant event. My thoughts about war have not changed.

D&Q: Was there anything, beyond your personal experiences, that inspired you to create a graphic novel on the war? One of the extraordinary aspects of this book is that, when it was first published in 1973, there were virtually no other graphic novels, in any country, taking on such a serious subject with this level of ambition and scope. Were you aware at the time that this was such a groundbreaking work, not just in Japan, but in the world as well?

SM: I wasn't aware that it was a pioneering work. I was just single-minded in my desire to write it.

D&Q: In your afterword for this book, you note that the events recounted here are "90 percent fact." Was there anything from your experiences in the war that you felt that you could not include in this book, either because it was too sensitive politically or because it compromised the privacy of any of the other survivors from your group?

SM: There was nothing in particular that I hesitated to write about.

D&Q: You note that, unlike the ending portrayed in this book, about eighty men had, in fact, survived the battle. Have you maintained a friendship with any of your fellow survivors?

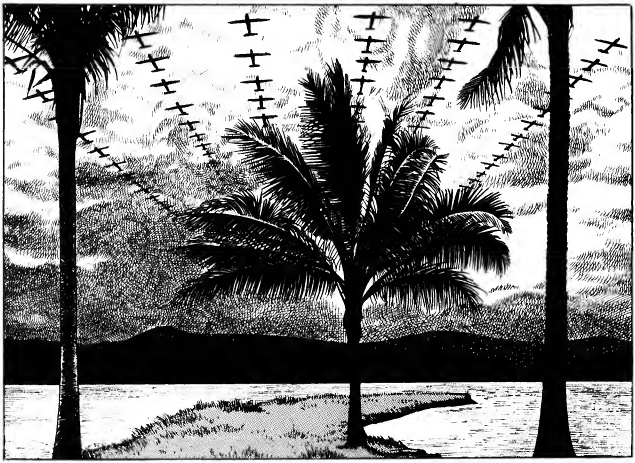
SM: I haven't had much contact with my war buddies since I came back to Japan. The ones that I was really close with all died in the war.

D&Q: The landscapes and overall scenery portrayed here are masterfully drawn and characterized by an intense realism. What sort of visual references did you use? Was this primarily drawn from memory (or reference photographs) or at any point did you travel back to the island of New Britain?

SM: I ran into my former commanding officer from the front at work, which led me to visit Rabaul after twenty-six years. That ended up being what made my desire to leave a record with *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* so strong. The details in the book are mostly from memory, but I also used some photographs and things from when I visited.

D&Q: What sort of critical reception did *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* receive in Japan when it was first published?

SM: It didn't really get that much attention, actually.



D&Q: You were one of the first artists to attempt to do serious, non-fiction manga with your biography of Adolf Hitler in 1971. Was doing this biography a step towards doing your own autobiographical works, which are still somewhat rare in Japan?

SM: I was intrigued by Hitler. There's no relationship between my writing about Hitler and my autobiographical works.

D&Q: What has formed the basis of your cultural influences? What other manga, films, books, etc., have inspired you?

SM: My influences cover a wide range of things, and I can't specifically point to one. It's probably better to answer that I don't have any.

D&Q: Your body of work appears to stand out beyond much of the manga that has come out of Japan over the last thirty years or so. In particular, books such as *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* and *NonNonBâ* are distinguished by an intense personal vision that seems uncharacteristic of much of contemporary commercial manga. Do you feel that your work shares a greater affinity with other *manga-ka* [Japanese cartoonists] of an earlier era? Do you read any current or recent manga works?

SM: I don't feel there is any affinity with any particular *manga-ka*. I don't read recent manga.

D&Q: How long did it take you to write and draw this book? Was it serialized in any form (magazines, newspapers) or was it published upon completion as one entity?

SM: It took almost no time to plan it. I finished writing it in a short period. My strong feeling of wanting to write it, of needing to write it, forced me to do so.

D&Q: In your career as a *manga-ka*, you have tackled a wide range of subject matter, from the events in this book that relate to your own experiences in the war, to the supernatural elements in *Akuma-kun* and *NonNonBâ,* to the biography of Hitler. Do you have a work that you are most proud of? For English-speaking readers encountering your work for the first time, what other books after *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* would you recommend?

SM: I would have to say *GeGeGe no Kitarô*.

D&Q: It would be something of an understatement to say that your work is long overdue for publication in English. Given the scope of your influence and accomplishments in Japan, it's very surprising that this is the first time that your work is being translated into English. How do you feel about *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* being published in North America for the first time?

SM: I'm extremely happy about it. I hope readers will come to understand the feelings of the Japanese soldiers fighting on the foremost lines of the battlefield.